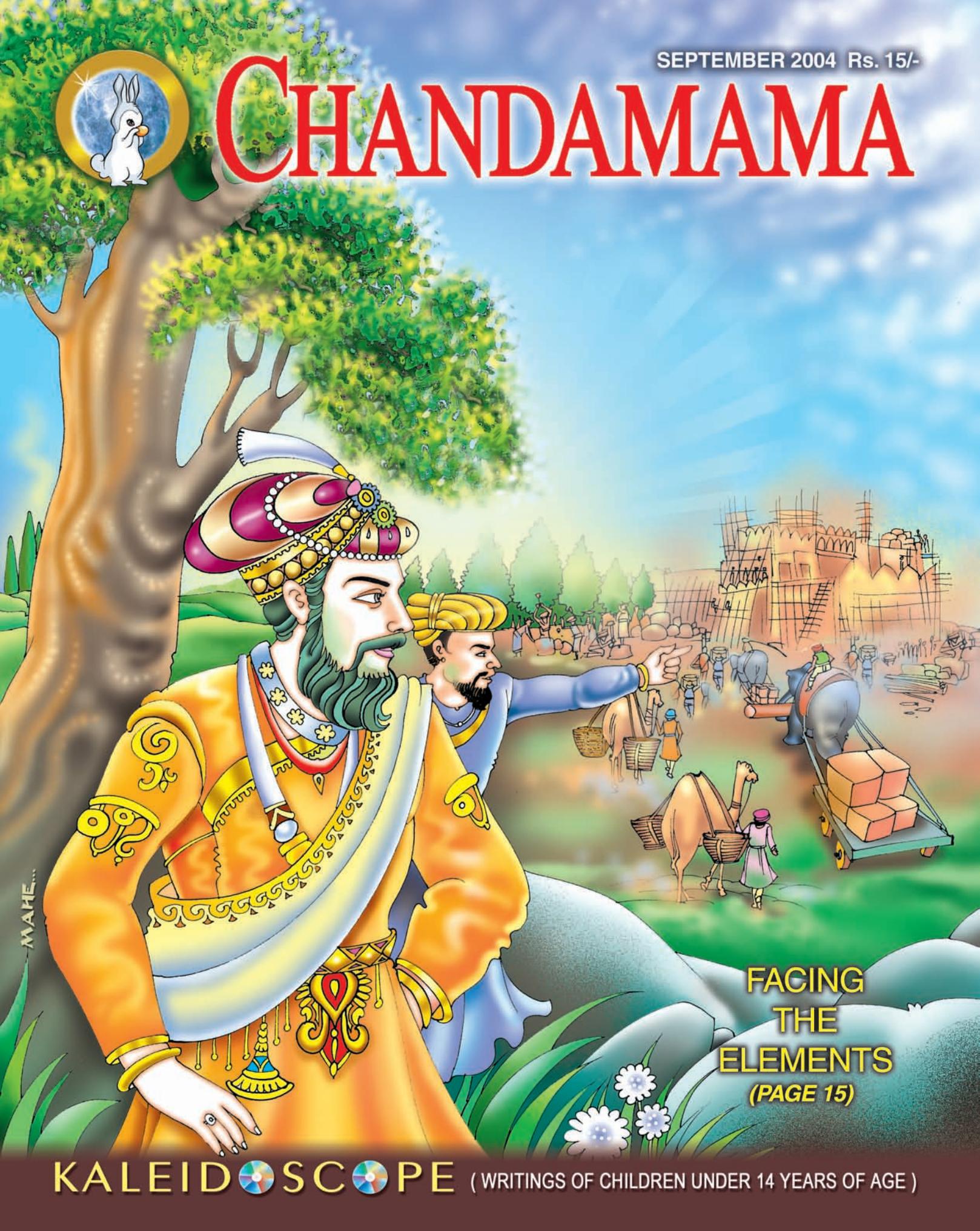


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THE
ELEMENTS
(PAGE 15)

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11
Statues That Came Alive
(Vikram and Vetal)
 15
Facing the Elements
(A page from Indian history)

17
My Tall Green Friends
(Ruskin Bond)
 26

A Bride Chooses Her Bridegroom
(A folk tale from Uttarakhand)

54
Did They Conquer the Invincible?
(Adventures and Explorations)



62
Glimpses of Devi Bhagavatam
(Mythology)



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Vol. 34 September 2004 No.9

CONTENTS

- ★ Indiascope ...7
- ★ Who Makes a Good Teacher? ...8
- ★ Remembering Our Teacher ...10
- ★ News Flash ...14
- ★ Unholy Ascetic
(A Jataka tale) ...20
- ★ The Preacher Learns His Lesson
(Legends from other lands) ...22
- ★ Second World War ...24
- ★ Kittens in My House ...28
- ★ Science Fair ...30
- ★ Laugh Till You Drop *(Humour)* ...32
- ★ Kaleidoscope ...33
- ★ Arya *(Comics)* ...37
- ★ Fair and Square ...41
- ★ Read and React
(Competition in Creative Writing) ...44
- ★ A Home Away from Home ...46
- ★ The Fake Notes ...48
- ★ ABC of Science ...50
- ★ Mail-bag ...52
- ★ Puzzle Dazzle ...53
- ★ A Lesson at a Price
(From the Arabian Nights) ...58
- ★ A Silver Victory at Athens ...64
- ★ Photo Caption Contest ...66

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CHENNAI : SHIVAJI

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Mobile : 98412-77347

email : advertisements@chandamama.org

DELHI : OBEROI MEDIA SERVICES

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Mobile : 98100-72961, email : a.s.oberoi@indiatimes.com

Founded by
B. Nagi Reddi
Chakrapani
Editor
Viswam

Editorial Advisors
Ruskin Bond
Manoj Das
Consultant Editor
K.Ramakrishnan

LESSONS FROM A TRAGEDY



There was this story of the young boy, of courage and character, who saved his sister, and then another child. When he went in for a third time, fate caught him. He was never seen again. Perhaps his memory will come alive again when the next Bravery Awards are announced on Children's Day.

Nearly a hundred innocent lives were lost for no fault of theirs. We refer to the recent fire tragedy in a school at Kumbakonam. Most of the victims were aged below ten or twelve. The twenty odd teachers present in the school at that time could not do anything to save them.

In the order of respect due from us, after our mother and father comes the teacher. All of them have to be looked upon as gods. That is the kind of veneration teachers can expect from children. Our President, Dr. Abdul Kalam, who had donned the role of a teacher after retiring from government service, had occasion to remember some of his teachers in a broadcast on the eve of Teachers Day last year. Of one teacher he said he could always be a role model for students as well as other teachers. As recently as last month, Dr. Abdul Kalam expressed his desire to go back to the teaching profession once he leaves the Rashtrapati Bhavan, adding that he would remain a teacher all his life. After all, isn't the teacher's profession the noblest? A teacher need not confine his role to the premises of the school where he or she works. The expression 'a friend, philosopher and guide' will best suit the teacher. The Kumbakonam tragedy should make all the teachers reflect on their functions as the custodians of the innocent and budding children – including their duty to ensure safe environments for the children and their own response to a crisis.

Schools are called *Vidyalayas* – the sacred abode of learning - and, next to places of worship, they are the most hallowed of all institutions. But schools must have the basic amenities, including measures to ensure safety and minimum of comfort. The authorities must insist on all the schools fulfilling such necessities.

Visit us at : <http://www.chandamama.org>

There is no such thing as inevitable war.
If war comes, it will be from failure of human wisdom.

-Andrew Bonar Law

One declares so many things to be a crime that it becomes impossible for men to live without breaking laws.

There can be no such thing, in law or in morality, as actions forbidden to an individual, are permitted to a mob.

-Ayn Rand

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2ND PRIZE



Calculators

5. Track down all the 'M's in the Nutrine advertisement in this issue.

9 4 7



DID YOU KNOW?

Johnny Weissmuller, a champion swimmer, won gold medals in Olympic Games before he began enacting Tarzan in 19 movies.



OLYMPIC QUIZ CONTEST AND WIN ATTRACTIVE PRIZES!

Beginning from May, your favourite magazine Chandamama in English and all its language editions will carry Nutrine - Chandamama contests for 6 months. All you have to do is to choose the right answers, fill in the entry form and mail this page, along with 5 wrappers of 'Nutrine Chocolate Eclairs', before the closing date, to Nutrine Chandamama Contest, Chandamama India Limited, 82 Defence Officers's Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.

This is an all India contest. Every month there will be different questions. There are fabulous prizes to be won. Watch out every month and participate. There will be 3 Konica cameras, 10 Calculators, and 50 Nutrine sweet hampers as first, second and third prizes respectively every month. At the end of the 5 monthly contests, the 6th contest offers a Bumper Draw and the winner will get a Personal Computer, in addition to the regular prizes. Participation in all the 6 months alone will entitle the entries for the Bumper Draw. Results of the Bumper draw will be announced in December by post.

NUTRINE CHANDAMAMA OLYMPIC QUIZ CONTEST - 5

Study the questions carefully and tick [✓] the correct answer in the blanks provided for each question.

1. Who won the Women's Marathon at the 2000 Sydney Olympics?
 Naoko Takahashi Marie-Jose Perec Paula Ivan
2. What is the maximum distance recorded in Men's Long Jump in Olympic Games?
 7.00 m 7.4 m 7.8 m
3. In which year was Tennis introduced in Olympic Games as a medal event?
 1936 1988 1992
4. In Weightlifting how many different body weight classes (feather weight, light weight etc) have been introduced in Olympic Games since 1976?
 4 6 10



Contest Rules :-

- Employees of Nutrine and Chandamama and their relatives are not eligible for the contest • The selection of the Judges will be at the sole discretion of Nutrine • Children of Indian origin below 15 years age group alone are eligible for the contest • Nutrine reserves their exclusive right to extend or preclose the contest • Contestants age proof to be supported by date of birth certificate • Winners will be selected by draw among correct entries • Winners will be notified individually • No cash compensation is allowed in place of prize articles
- Warranty of prize articles are subject to the respective manufacturer • You can send only one entry per month • You can participate in any or all of the 6 contests • No correspondence other than entry forms will be accepted • Your signing the coupon will mean that you agree to the rules and regulations of the contest given on the coupon • Entries reaching us after the last date mentioned will be disqualified • If there are no all correct entries in any event, the maximum number of correct answers will be considered and the entries will go into the lot • All decisions made by the judges will be final.

CLOSING DATE : 30TH September 2004

Your Name :

Age : Class: Date of Birth :

Home address and PIN code :

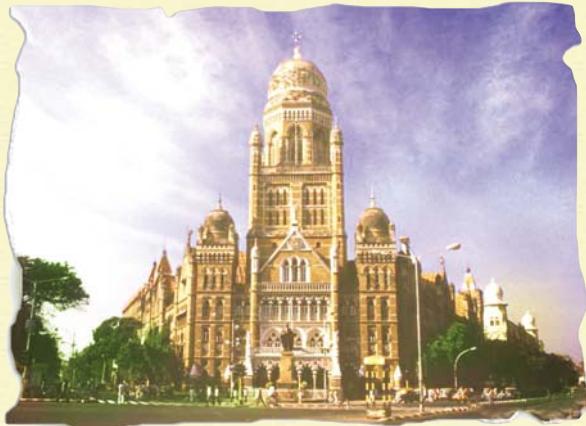
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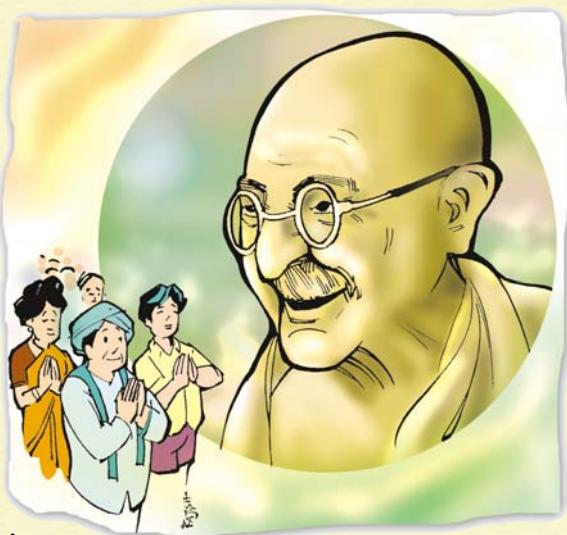
Heritage status for station

Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (C.S.T) in Mumbai has been accorded World Heritage status. This came about when UNESCO held a meeting in Suzhou in China. The other railway station in India enjoying a similar status is Darjeeling in West Bengal. What is described as the world's busiest railway station, the C.S.T. is constructed in Victorian style combined with Gothic architecture. Construction started in 1878 and the station was ready in the next ten years. The total cost then was

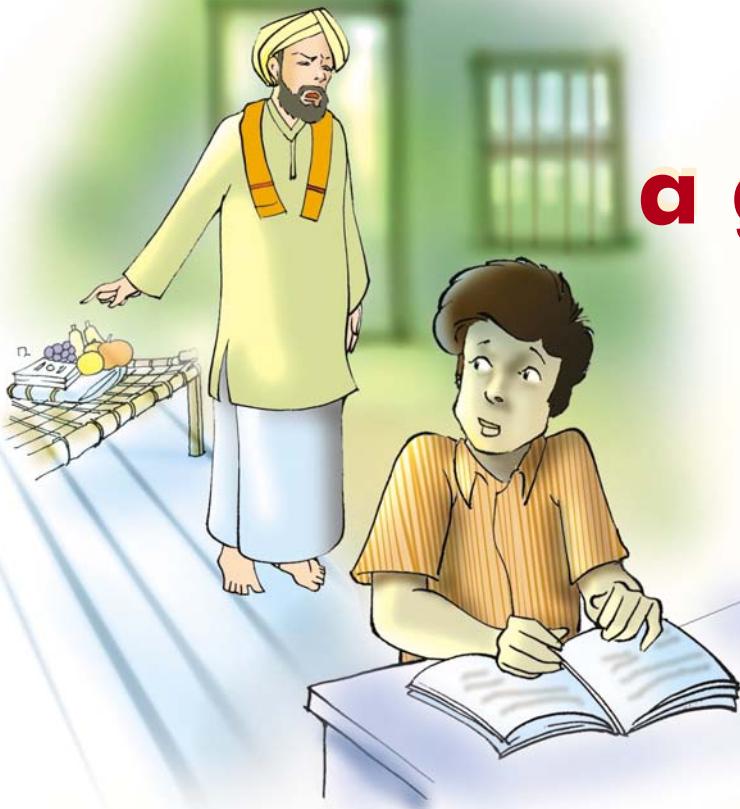
Rs 16.14 lakh. The station was named Victoria Terminus after Queen Victoria. It was popularly called and known as V.T. In 1929, thirteen platforms were added. In 1996, two more were added and the name changed. Every day as many as 68 Express and Passenger trains, besides 1,080 suburban trains leave and arrive at C.S.T. which receives 3,000,000 commuters in a day. UNESCO has by now declared more than 750 places or buildings all over the world as Heritage Centres.

A temple for Gandhiji

The whole country reveres the Father of the Nation. But the people of Sambalpur, in Orissa, have gone a step further. They have put up a temple and installed a bronze idol of Gandhiji. Regular worship is conducted both in the morning and evening and aarti taken. Instead of bhajans, the devotees sing patriotic songs which, the older generation remembers, were a regular feature at Gandhiji's evening discourses wherever he would be. Republic Day (Jan 26), Martyrs Day (Jan 30) and Gandhi Jayanti (Oct 2) are special days at the temple when the largest number of worshippers can be seen. Its architecture is of the traditional Hindu style. Sambalpur is not one of India's prosperous towns, and the small population there feels that they can never forget Gandhiji who was a friend of the poor, says the pujari, Agasti Sohela.



Who makes a good teacher?



This is a leaf from the life of Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam, President of India.

India had just become a free nation. Panchayat Board elections were being held. His father, Janab Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen, was elected from Rameshwaram and he was subsequently chosen the Panchayat President. He was elected on the strength of his nobility of mind and for being a good human being, and not on the basis of religion or economic status.

That evening young Abdul Kalam was studying under the light from a kerosene lamp. There was a knock on the door and a stranger came in. He said he had something to hand over to his father. He was away for his *namaz*, and Abdul Kalam's mother, too, was at her prayers. So, he casually told the visitor that he could leave the packet on the cot. The man did so and went away.

When Abdul Kalam's father

came back, he saw the packet. "What is this? Who has kept it here?" he asked. "Someone had come and he left it," replied young Abdul Kalam. His father then opened the packet. It contained a costly dhoti, a shawl, fruits and sweets, and a slip. He did not seek any explanation; he was very angry and began beating his son. His mother came in and requested his father to stop beating their son. After all, the boy could not be blamed. The father then quoted an Islamic *Hadith* which states that when the Almighty appoints someone to a position, He takes care to provide him with whatever he needs. If he were to accept anything more than that, it would be illegal gain. He told his son: "A gift is always accompanied by some motive and, therefore, accepting a gift is a sin."

Abdul Kalam had no animosity towards his father for his angry reaction. Instead, he felt that he had learnt a very valuable lesson. It got deeply embedded in his mind.

Another incident was to prove a turning point in his life. He was then a student in the 8th Standard. They had a teacher called Siva Subramania Iyer, who Dr. Abdul Kalam would describe as one of the good teachers in his school. One day, he was teaching how birds fly. He drew

a picture of a bird on the blackboard, complete with wings, tail, head, and the body structure. He explained how the birds first create a 'lift' and then fly, and how they are able to change their direction while flying, and also how they fly in formations. The children listened to him in rapt attention. At the end of the class, he asked them whether they understood how birds fly.

There was silence for sometime. Then Abdul Kalam



stood up and said he could not. The teacher then turned to the other students. They all admitted that they did not understand. The teacher was not at all upset. Instead he said he would take them to the seashore that evening.

During their stay at the beach, he could show them seabirds flying in formations. They were amazed. He then asked them to watch how birds flapped their wings and twisted their tails to change direction. He told them that the 'engine' to power the flight is within the bird which only wanted the motivation to fly. By the time they went back home, the children had gained some knowledge of the dynamics of flight. It was a practical lesson. What could not be explained in 30 minutes in the classroom could be taught in 15 minutes on the seashore! Dr. Abdul Kalam says that Siva Subramania Iyer was a committed teacher.

On his return home, Abdul Kalam almost decided that if ever he got a chance, he would study flight and flight systems. He seems to have even decided on his future career. No wonder, some years later, when he joined the Madras Institute of Technology, he chose Aeronautical Engineering as the mainstream of study. It was a turning point in his life though he was only 13 at that time.

Let us go 'fast forward' as they say. Dr. Abdul Kalam was working in the Aeronautical Development Establishment of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Bangalore. The year was 1958. Dr. Kalam was working on hovercraft, which needs what is called ducted contra-rotating propellers. He knew how to design a conventional propeller, but not the type of propeller a hovercraft requires. He was advised to approach Prof. Satish Dhawan of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, who was well-known for his aeronautical research.

With the permission of his superior, Dr. Kalam went to Prof. Dhawan and explained his problem. He told Dr. Kalam that if he would attend his class every Saturday for six weeks, he would teach him how to design the propeller. Prof. Dhawan prepared a schedule for the entire course, provided reference material, and also gave him books to read before



the course started. Before commencing the class, Prof. Dhawan would put critical questions to Dr. Abdul Kalam to find out how much he had understood. According to him, only a good teacher would take such pains to plan so meticulously to prepare the student for acquiring knowledge.

At the end of six weeks, Dr. Kalam knew everything about contra-rotating propellers. As luck would have it, he got an opportunity to work with Prof. Dhawan, who had become Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on developing India's satellite launch vehicle (SLV) to put the rocket Rohini into orbit. To Dr. Kalam it was a dream come true.



Dr. Abdul Kalam recalls how he learnt moral values from his father, "through the hard way", how a teacher like Siva Subramania Iyer can easily become a role model for students, and how a touch of professionalism in teaching can create confidence and will power. Teachers are lamps in one's life which, in turn, illuminate many more lamps.

(Based on a broadcast on the eve of Teachers Day, 2003)

REMEMBERING YOUR TEACHER

We had announced a competition in the August issue, to commemorate Teachers Day. There was no outstanding write-up among the three hundred odd entries that came. However, we have picked up two. These two entries will share the prize money. Our hearty congratulations to Sanjana and Manoj!



TAKE PEOPLE ALONG

I am now studying in the 4th Standard. I had many teachers who have been very kind, supportive and critical. Though each one of them has made a lasting impression on me, I take this opportunity to write about one of them.

Ma'am Angel is one I often remember. She taught me in 2nd Standard and improved my capabilities in language, composition, literature and dictation. She was a kind teacher, always full of smiles.

I recall one incident which has taught me that sharing success brings more happiness. One day, Ma'am Angel asked the whole class to pray for her as she was to attend an exam. None of the students knew what exam it was. After two days, the newspapers reported that she had been crowned Mrs Goa in a tough contest! I was very happy to learn about it. All the students were overjoyed and felt that each one had won the contest! This was so because she had made all of us feel that our prayers had given her the confidence to contest and succeed. I realised that by taking people around you along with, your success makes the effort more enjoyable.

- By Sanjana Anil Hegde (9), Goa

A WRONG PLACE FOR TEAM SPIRIT!

We were having our final test in Chemistry, for which I had been preparing hard for over a month, for I was under 'pressure' to maintain the "Chemistry topper" position in my class.

Malini Madam, our Chemistry teacher, distributed the question paper and gave us an hour to complete answering the paper. I glanced at the question paper and was much relieved to see only those formulas and equations which I had studied well. I completed answering the paper in less than half an hour and started feeling bored. How would I spend the remaining half hour?

I looked around and saw Reghu, sitting next to me, struggling with the formulas. He was the captain of our class cricket team, but was poor in Chemistry. He wanted me to raise my answer script a little so that he could read what I had written.

I hesitated for sometime. Then I remembered. He had told me that if I helped him in the test, he would include me in his team. The offer was too tempting to resist, as a place in the cricket team was my dream. So, I slightly tilted my answer script.

Suddenly there was a pat on my back. I looked up and saw the smiling face of Malini Madam! I froze for a

moment. Did she see what I was doing? She continued to smile and said, "Manoj, try to score full marks for the test." I gave a sigh of relief and told myself, 'Thank God! She didn't see the drama!'

The next day the results were on the notice board. I was shocked to see that I got only 50/100 when I had expected full marks! At the same time Reghu, who never passed a single Chemistry test, was getting the same marks.

I rushed to Malini Madam and looked at her questioningly. With the same old smile she said, "Manoj, I told you in the exam hall to score full marks, didn't I? Since it was a team work, you and your partner Reghu have to share the marks you both get. He got zero and you got full marks! So, the marks were shared between the team members. Now you know where you lost half of your marks!"

I had no reply. I felt terribly ashamed that she had caught me red-handed. But I was thankful to her that she did not put me to shame in front of the whole class. The message was conveyed to me loud and clear. I continue to be the topper in Chemistry in my class! I shall never forget what my teacher did for me.

- By Manoj Thomas (14) Trivandrum

**NEW TALES
OF KING
VIKRAM AND
THE VETALA**

Statues that came alive

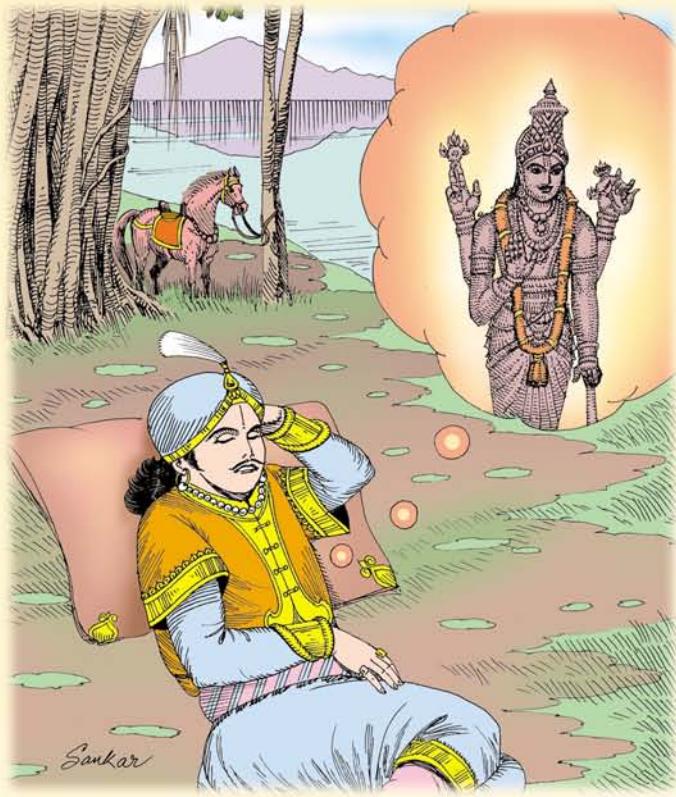


It was a dark, moonless night. Only occasional flashes of lightning lit up the sombre scene and caused an eerie dance of jerky and frightening shadows in the cremation ground. Occasionally the silence was broken by the unearthly howling of jackals and laughter of evil spirits. But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again he made his way to the old gnarled tree where the corpse was hanging. A skull crunched under his feet and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy. Unperturbed, he reached the tree and brought down the corpse. Slinging it on his shoulder, he had begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I fail to understand why you have embarked on this hazardous venture. You appear to have forgotten even the responsibilities you bear towards your subjects and kingdom! Maybe, you expect some big gains from this endeavour. But be careful lest you lose the hard-won fruits of victory by your own reckless action. This was what happened to Manohar. Listen to his story." The vampire then narrated the following tale.

Long ago, King Veeravardhana ruled the kingdom of Shonapuri. He was a vassal of the emperor of Kanakagiri. Veeravardhana was an ardent devotee of his family deity, Chennakesava.

One day, the king rode out into the forest bordering his kingdom for hunting. He was coming to this area for the first time, and the verdant beauty of the place enchanted him. The mountain peaks that proudly raised their heads amid the lush green woods, the river that snaked its way through the valleys - all added to the nature's magic.

Tired out from the exertions of the morning, the king lay down to rest in the shade of a tree. As he dozed off,



he had a dream in which Lord Chennakesava appeared and said, "Listen, O King! Once upon a time, my temple stood on the tallest peak of this mountain. But over the centuries, it fell into ruin and disuse, and today no one even remembers it. A banyan tree stands to the west of the ruined shrine. If you dig under it, you will unearth an idol of mine. Take it out and build a new temple atop the peak, enshrining the idol. This will bring prosperity to you and your kingdom. Entrust the task of building the temple to sculptor Manohar of Uttampur village."

Waking up from his dream, the king was elated and decided to carry out the divine order without delay. On returning to his capital, he immediately sent for Manohar and ordered him to commence the task of building the temple.

The mammoth task of temple construction began. The idol was found at the spot where the Lord had said it would be. However, building the temple turned out to be a much costlier exercise than the king had originally envisaged. Soon the royal treasury was empty. There was no money to pay the annual tribute due to the emperor of Kanakagiri.

That was the time when the old emperor had died

and his son, Dheerasena, had ascended the throne. Unlike his father, Dheerasena was a tyrant who was eager to amass more wealth. The vassals' tributes were increased, and Veeravardhana was ordered to clear all the arrears of payment at once.

Veeravardhana met the young emperor and informed him of his inability to make the payment. Dheerasena was furious. He decided to annex Shonapuri to his empire, and sent out a huge army to invade the small kingdom.

On reaching Shonapuri's borders, the invading army came across the newly built temple on the mountain. The commander declared, "It is this temple that is the cause of all the trouble. Pull it down forthwith!"

Obeying his order, the soldiers scaled the peak and reached the temple. The stone sentinels outside were so perfectly carved and lifelike that they could not take their eyes off them. Eventually, just as they had steeled themselves to the task on hand and raised their weapons to demolish the temple, a miracle happened. The eyes of statues were seen to fill with tears!

The soldiers became panicky. Fearing that something untoward was going to happen, they abandoned their efforts and beat a hasty retreat down the mountain. When Dheerasena was informed of what had happened, he too became afraid of the evil omen and recalled his army.

The people of Shonapuri rejoiced at the miracle that had saved their kingdom. All praised the sculptor who had wrought such magic. But King Veeravardhana summoned Manohar and chided him. "What kind of sculptor are you? You should have created statues that would use their swords to fight the invader, instead of shedding tears! If only your statues had come to life and cut down the enemy, we would not be facing humiliation today!"

Manohar did not say a word in reply. The very next day, he returned to the mountain and commenced work on a ten thousand-pillared building. On each pillar he carved, with superlative craftsmanship, the figure of an armed horseman with sword raised, ready to strike. He used up all his reward money in the construction, and raised funds through donations when this was exhausted. When the work was completed, he took King Veeravardhana to the structure and said, "Sire, now we

need fear none. We can be independent.” The king was elated. He promptly issued a public proclamation that Shonapuri was henceforth independent of Kanakagiri. Soon the news reached Dheerasena, who sent a huge army to subdue the arrogant vassal.

As the battle was going on, Manohar climbed up the mountain to the structure he had built. With a magic wand, he touched each statue, commanding, “Come to life! Join the battle and bring victory to our king!”

The mounted warriors sprang to life. They joined the battle and fought fiercely on the side of Shonapuri. Soon the powerful army of Kanakagiri was routed. Veeravardhana was a proud victor!

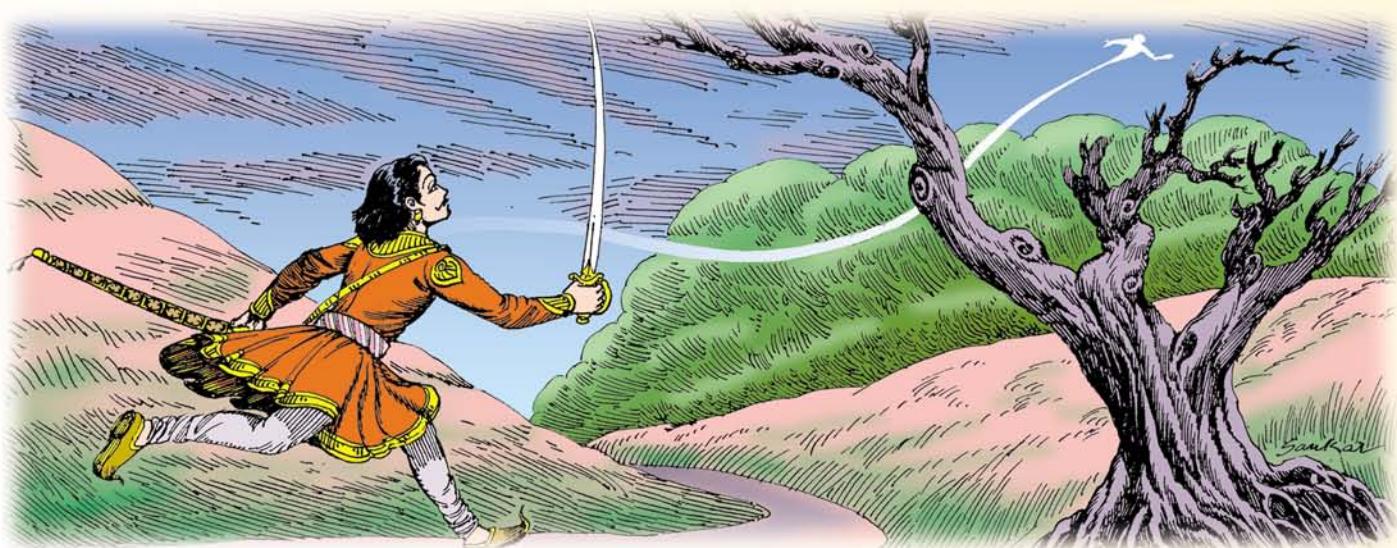
The overjoyed king decided to have a grand ceremony in honour of Manohar, the sculptor who had brought about the victory. But Manohar was nowhere to be found. Search parties were sent in various directions to look for him, but to no avail. He had evidently left the kingdom.

Having concluded his story, the vampire turned to Vikram and asked, “O King! Isn’t Manohar’s behaviour most peculiar? He was either a fool or a very arrogant fellow. Because of his magical ability, he was the architect of Veeravardhana’s victory; yet he denied himself the honour and rewards that were his due! Why? Answer me if you can. If you keep quiet, despite knowing the answer, your head shall shatter into a thousand fragments!”

King Vikram calmly answered, ‘Manohar was neither

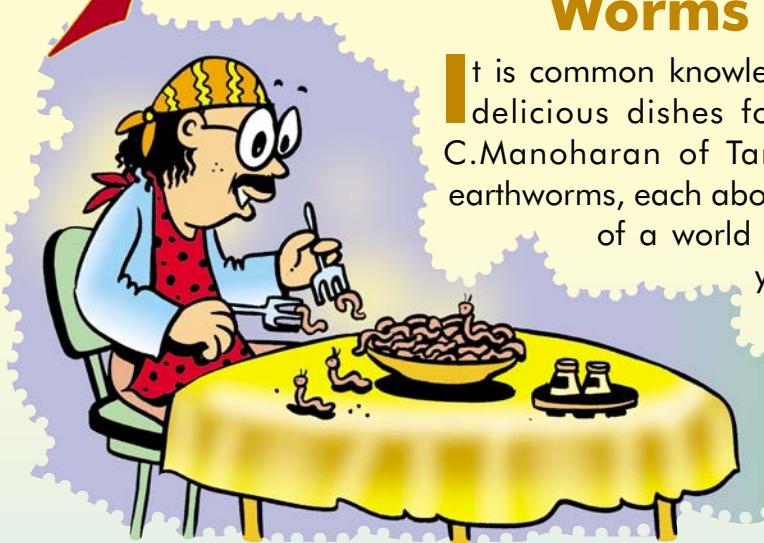
foolish nor arrogant. He was so talented that the post of royal sculptor came to him without his seeking it. His creations were masterpieces of art, so much so the gods, impressed by his skill and sincerity, endowed them with life. But the king did not honour him properly. Instead of lauding his extraordinary talent, he wanted to misuse it for his own selfish interest. Every artist craves for recognition, and Manohar was no exception. So, he was deeply saddened by the king’s reaction. But he did not show it, and instead decided to use his talents for a noble purpose – the liberation of his homeland. By creating statues of warriors and bringing them to life, he ensured Shonapuri’s victory. Finally, there was a very good reason why he left the kingdom. The king had commanded him to breathe life into the stone warriors to defend the country. As this was justified, he complied. But who can say that the same king, driven by greed, would not command him tomorrow to create a wish-fulfilling tree or some other magical object? Manohar’s job was to create stone sculptures and he was very good at this. As for creating living beings, that is the job of Brahma, the divine Creator! When one takes up a task that is beyond his ability, no matter how superlative an artist he is, at some point he will fail. Manohar foresaw all this and that is why, having fulfilled his original purpose, he slipped away.”

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his speech than the vetala gave him the slip once again. Squaring his shoulders, he went off in pursuit of it.



Newsflash

Worms in Guinness menu!

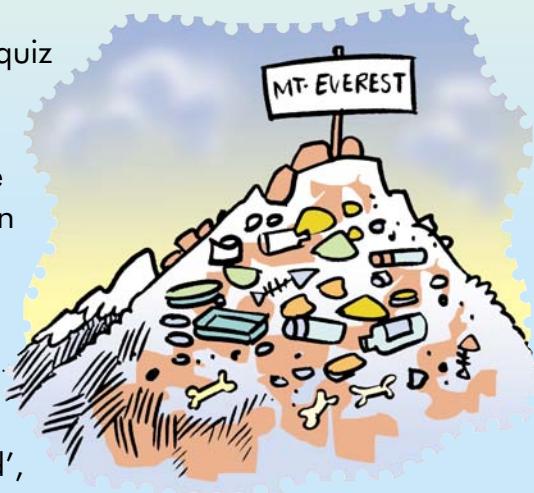


It is common knowledge that worms and snakes are turned into delicious dishes for the Chinese palate. 'Snake Mano' or C. Manoharan of Tambaram, near Chennai, swallowed 200 earthworms, each about 10 cm long, in just 30 seconds for the sake of a world record! He claims that during the last three years he has not eaten insects or reptiles. Earlier?

We can only assume that they were part of his daily menu. Aren't you curious to know how he got the name Snake Mano? Well, this 26-year-old entertainer used to ease small reptiles—cobras included—through his nostrils and pull them out through his mouth!

Highest waste dump

Everest is the world's highest peak. Right! However, the quiz master may say 'wrong' in another 10 or 15 years, if we have to believe Jamling Norgay, son of Tenzing Norgay who, along with Edmund Hillary, scaled the peak for the first time 51 years ago. From reports brought by Everesters, the mountain peak is slowly 'turning into the highest dumping ground for garbage'. And Jamling identifies the garbage as titbits of food, tents, paper and plastic cups, plastic bags, broken poles, empty bottles, and human waste. The actual summit is a patch of about 200 sq.ft and can accommodate some 20 or 30 persons at a time. It's time the climbers are 'scanned', like in airports, and permitted to go up only empty-handed!



Mail bags climb mountain pass

Nathu La is a mountain pass between India and China 14,500ft high. Normally nobody crosses the pass on any day. But there is an exception. Every Sunday Mr. Yi, a Chinese postman, brings a mailbag, stays in Indian territory for not more than three minutes, and goes back empty-handed. On Thursdays, an Indian postman, Mr. Bahadur Singh, crosses over to Chinese territory, drops a mailbag and returns—all within three minutes. Neither of them has a visa to be in a foreign territory, but they do their job with regularity.

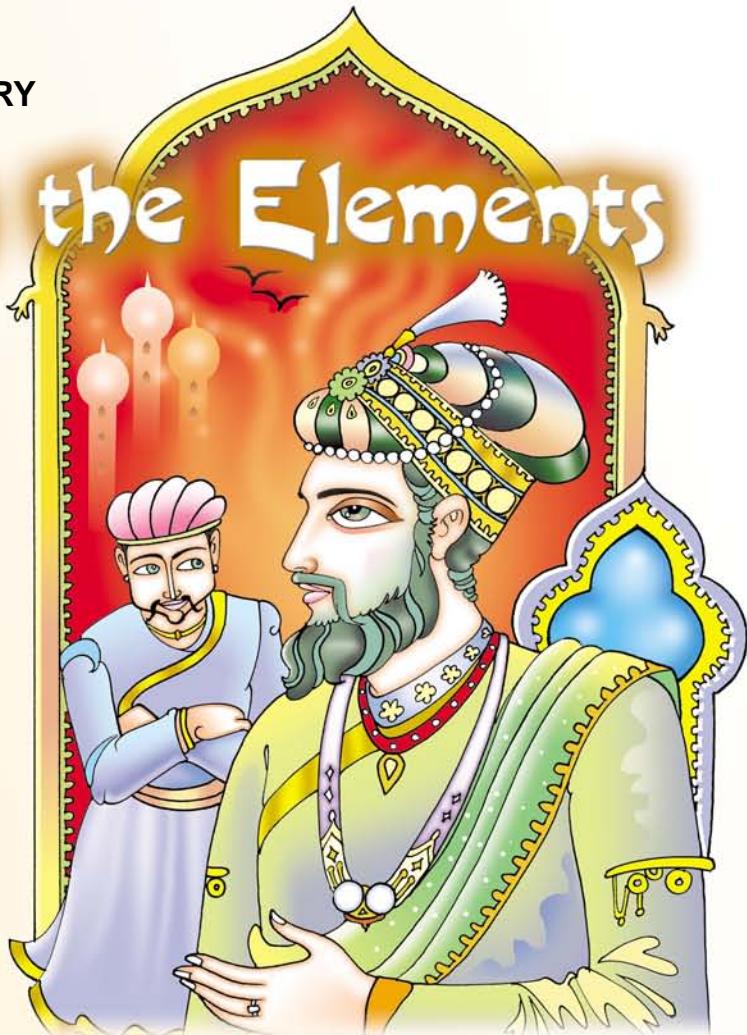


Facing the Elements

There is an interesting story in the *Ramayana* about the importance of facing the elements. When Lord Rama, Lakshmana and Sita went off on their 14-year-long exile, they had to live in the forest. Lakshmana volunteered to build a hut for them to live in. He soon built a lovely one with branches and wood and draped the roof and walls with tamarind leaves. The tamarind leaves used to be huge and thick in those days and provided a solid covering. So much so, not even a drop of rain or sunlight could come through. Sita was delighted with the hut and said it looked like a proper house. But Lord Rama was not happy. Finally he asked Lakshmana to remove the tamarind leaves. "But why?" asked Lakshmana and Sita in surprise. "Because we are expected to face the elements during our period of exile and not be totally protected against them as we are now," replied Lord Rama. "There is no need to remove the leaves," said Lakshmana taking out his bow and arrows. He shot at the leaves so that they were shredded like feathers and sunlight streaked in from all sides. That is how tamarind leaves came to be serrated and have remained so ever since.

Facing the elements is equally important in architecture if the building is meant to be a lasting one. This story in the *Ramayana* reminds us of an incident that took place when the Red Fort was being built in Delhi. After ruling from Agra for eleven years, Shah Jahan decided to move his capital to Delhi. Apart from other considerations, an important reason for this decision could have been because the artist and builder in him craved to create more. Percival Spear calls him "the architectural director of his day".

Shah Jahan decided to build his new capital at Delhi complete with a citadel and a royal residential complex. "Delhi has been the capital of Hindustan from time immemorial," he wrote in his memoirs as he finalized his



plans. "It shall again be the seat of the Mughal Empire. Here I shall raise a mighty fort which will be the envy of our friends and the despair of our foes." Din-e-panah, the sixth city of Delhi, had remained a painful reminder of Humayun's tragic death, when he tumbled down the staircase of the library. So Shah Jahan decided to build his new city somewhere else. But he wanted a new site that would also have an open and pleasing landscape.

Shah Jahan sent his Mir-i-Imarat (supervisor of buildings) to Delhi to select the site of the new city. After looking around carefully, he finally chose the area around what we now know as Talkatora and Raisina Hill. But when Shah Jahan sent Ustad Hira and Ustad Hamid, two of his most expert masons, to take a look at the chosen site, they turned it down at once. They told the emperor that the soil was too full of minerals, especially saltpetre, which would damage the buildings. They selected an open space on the right bank of the river Yamuna, close to the Salimgarh fortress that had been built by Sher Shah Suri.



They said the soil there did not have any minerals and was just right for building. The Mir-i-Imarat agreed with them. So Shah Jahan gave his final approval and asked them to go ahead.

He sent architects and labourers from all over the empire. Stones for the fort were brought from a place near Agra and taken to Delhi in huge carts. They jammed the roads (something like the traffic jams we now face in Delhi!) and made things difficult for the ordinary traders who had to wait for ages to reach their ware to the markets. Sometimes it led to utter chaos and confusion and the entire neighbourhood suffered. Even the English factories at Agra could not move their goods to the coast! But the people just had to put up with it. After all no one could fight against the Emperor's orders!

The foundation stone of the new city was laid in 1638. The construction started under the supervision of Izzat Khan, Alah Vardi Khan and Makramat Khan, with Ustad Hamid and Ustad Hira at the helm. Mir Baqr Ali Khan, one of the best known story-tellers of the time, gives us

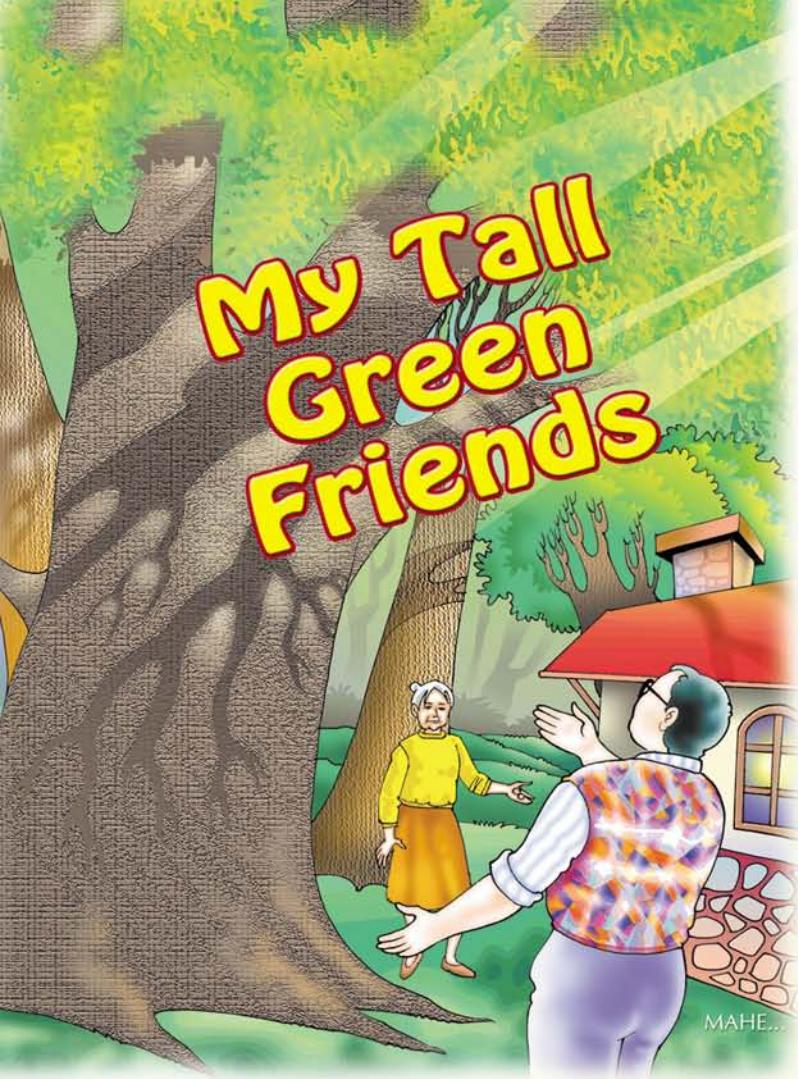
an interesting account of what happened after the work began in right earnest. According to his story, both Hira and Hamid disappeared as soon as the foundation was laid. No one could find any trace of the two. They seemed to have vanished into thin air!

The news reached the emperor who was frantic with worry. And he was very, very angry with both of them. In fact, he was about to order that they should be arrested and put to death immediately, when they turned up as suddenly as they had disappeared. Then they explained why they had run away. They said it was because they wanted the foundation to "remain open to the elements" for a certain number of days. This would help the soil to get properly seasoned to support a building meant to last forever, like the Taj Mahal. They were both sure that this time gap was something the supervisors would never allow because they were very keen to complete the city as fast as possible! The sooner it was built, the sooner they would get their money. But Hira and Hamid wanted the building to be strong and secure more than anything else. The emperor, who had great knowledge about buildings, saw their point at once. So he forgave them for playing truant. In fact, he thanked them for their foresight, and work on the great fort began from the very next day. The fort was finally completed in 1648. Shah Jahan rewarded the masons by gifting them with pieces of land. Many of the lanes around the fort are named after them even now. - *By Swapna Dutta*

Persians first began using coloured eggs to celebrate spring in 3,000 B.C. The Macedonians of the 13th century were the first Christians on record to use coloured eggs in Easter celebrations. Crusaders returning from the Middle East spread the custom of colouring eggs, and Europeans began to use them to celebrate Easter and other warm weather holidays.



My Tall Green Friends



Living for many years in a cottage at 7,000ft in the Garhwal Himalayas, I was fortunate in having a big window that opened out on the forest, so that the trees were almost within my reach. Had I jumped, I should have landed safely in the arms of an oak or a chestnut.

The incline of the hill was such that my first-floor window opened out on what must, I suppose, have been the second floor. I never made the jump, but the big langurs, silver-red monkeys with long swishing tails, often leapt from the trees onto the corrugated tin roof and made enough noise to disturb the bats sleeping in the space between the roof and ceiling.

Standing on its own was a walnut tree and, truly, this was a tree for all seasons. In winter its branches were bare but they were smooth and straight and round like the arms of a woman in a painting by Jamini Roy. In spring, each branch produced a hard bright spear of new leaf. By mid-summer the entire tree was in leaf, and towards the end of the monsoon the walnuts, encased in their green

jackets, had reached maturity. Then the jackets began to split, revealing the hard black shell of the walnuts. Inside the shell was the nut itself. Look closely at the nut and you will notice that it is shaped rather like the human brain. No wonder the ancient people prescribed walnuts for headaches!

Every year the tree gave me a basket of walnuts. But last year the walnuts were disappearing one by one, and I was at a loss as to know who had been taking them. Could it have been Biju, the milkman's son? He was an inveterate tree climber. But he was usually to be found on oak trees, gathering fodder for his cows. He told me that his cows liked oak leaves but did not care for walnuts. He admitted that they had relished my dahlias, which they had eaten the previous week, but he denied having fed them walnuts.

It wasn't the woodpecker. He was out there everyday, knocking furiously against the bark of the tree, trying to prise an insect out of a narrow crack. He was strictly non-vegetarian and none the worse for it.

One day I found a fat langur sitting in the walnut tree. I watched him for some time to see if he was going to help himself to the nuts, but he was only sunning himself. When he thought I wasn't looking, he came down and ate the geraniums, but he did not take any walnuts.

The walnuts had been disappearing early in the morning while I was still in bed. So one morning I surprised everyone, including myself, by getting up before sunrise. I was just in time to catch the culprit climbing out of the walnut tree.

She was an old woman who sometimes came to cut grass on the hillside. Her face was as wrinkled as the walnuts she had been helping herself to. In spite of her age, her arms and legs were sturdy. When she saw me, she was as swift as a civet-cat in getting out of the tree.

"And how many walnuts did you gather today, Grandmother?"

"Only two," she said with a giggle, offering them to me on her open palm. I accepted one of them. Encouraged, she climbed back into the tree and helped

herself to the remaining nuts. It was impossible to object. I was taken up in admiration of her agility in the tree. She must have been about sixty, and I was a mere forty-five, but I knew I would never be climbing trees again.

To the victor the spoils!

The horse-chestnuts are inedible; even the monkeys throw them away in disgust. Once, on passing beneath a horse-chestnut tree, a couple of chestnuts bounced off my head. Looking up, I saw that they had been dropped on me by a couple of mischievous rhesus monkeys.

The tree itself is a friendly one, especially in summer when it is in full leaf. The least breath of wind makes the leaves break into conversation and their rustle is a cheerful sound, unlike the sad notes of pine trees in the wind. The spring flowers look like candelabra, and when the blossoms fall they carpet the hillside with their pale pink petals.

We pass now to my favourite tree, the deodar. In Garhwal and Kumaon it is called 'dujar'; in Jaunsar and parts of Himachal, it is known as the 'kelu kelon'.

Trees, like humans, change with their environment. Several persons familiar with the deodar at Indian hill stations, when asked to point it out in London's Kew Gardens, indicated the cedar of Lebanon, and shown a deodar, declared they had never seen such a tree in the Himalayas!

We shall stick to the name deodar, which comes from the Sanskrit 'deva-daru' (divine tree). It is a sacred tree in the Himalayas; neither worshipped, nor protected in the way that a peepul is in the plains, but sacred in that its timber has always been used in temples for doors, windows, walls and even roofs. Quite frankly, I would just as soon worship the deodar as worship anything, for in its beauty and majesty it represents creation in its most noble aspect.

No one who has lived amongst deodars would deny that it is the most godlike of Himalayan trees. It stands



erect, dignified, and though in a strong wind it may hum and sigh and moan, it does not bend to the wind. The snow slips softly from the resilient branches. In the spring the new leaves are tender green, while in the monsoon the tiny young cones spread like blossoms in the dark green folds of the branches. The deodar thrives in the rain and enjoys the company of its own kind. Where one deodar grows, there will be others. Isolate a young tree and it will often pine away.

The great deodar forests are found along the upper reaches of the Bhagirathi valley and the Tons in Garhwal, and in Himachal and Kashmir, along the Chenab and the Jhelum rivers, and also on the Kishenganga. I had expected to find it on the upper reaches of the Alaknanda, but could not find a single deodar along the road to Badrinath.

The average girth of the deodar varies from 15 to 20ft. Records show that one great deodar was 250ft high, and more than 550 years old. The timber of these trees, which is unaffected by extremes of climate, was always highly prized for house-building. In the villages of Jaunsar Bawar, finely carved doors and windows are a feature of the timbered dwellings. Many of the quaint old bridges (some are 500 years old) over the Jhelum in Kashmir, have pillars made from whole deodar trees.

To return to my own tree, I went among them often, acknowledging their presence with a touch of my hand against their trunks—the walnut's smooth and polished, the pine's patterned and whorled; the oak's rough and gnarled, full of experience. The oak had been there the longest, and the wind had bent its upper branches and twisted a few, so that it looked shaggy and undistinguished. It is a good tree for the privacy of birds,

Did you know?

The flag of the Philippines is the only national flag that changes its appearance depending on whether it is peace or wartime. A portion of the flag is blue, while the other is red.

The blue portion is flown on top in time of peace and the red portion is flown on top in wartime.



its crooked branches spreading out with no particular effect; and sometimes the tree seems uninhabited until there is a whirring sound, as of a helicopter approaching, and a party of long-tailed blue magpies stream across the forest glade.

After the monsoon, when the dark red berries had ripened on the hawthorn, this pretty tree was visited by green pigeons, the kokla-birds of Garhwal, who clambered upside-down among the fruit-laden twigs. And during winter, a white-capped redstart perched on the bare branches of the wild pear tree and whistled cheerfully. He had come to winter in the garden.

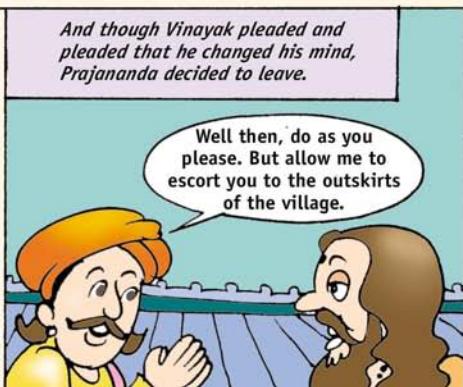
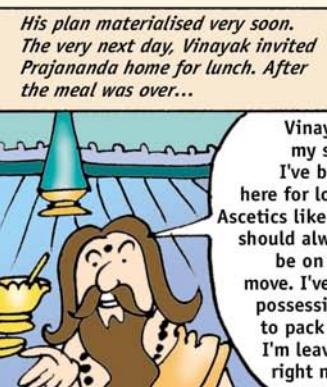
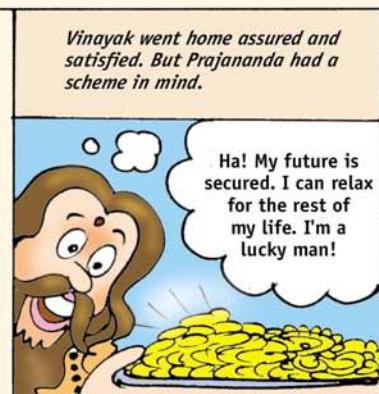
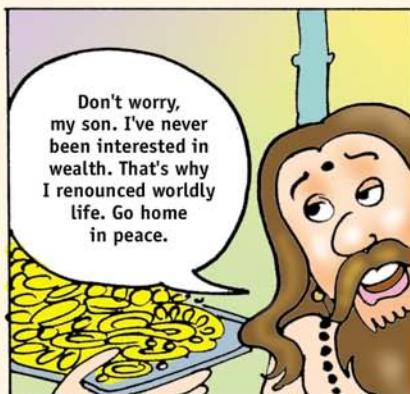
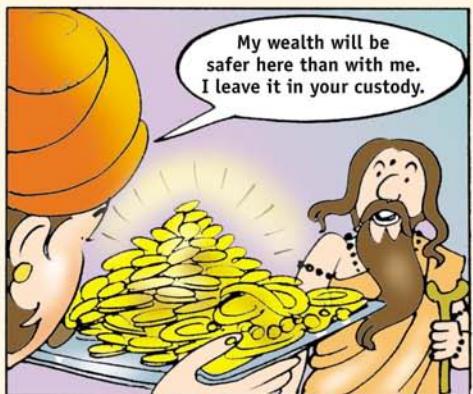
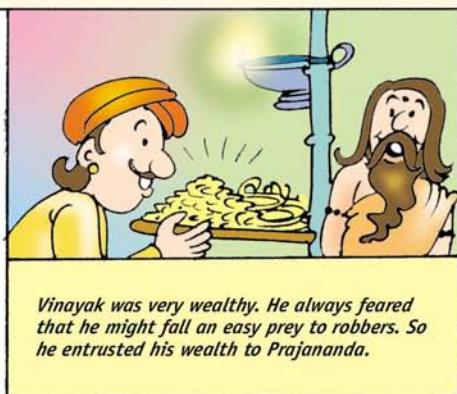
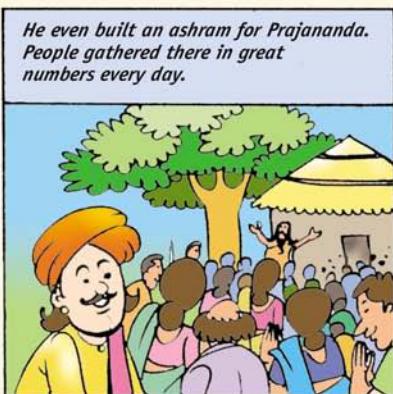
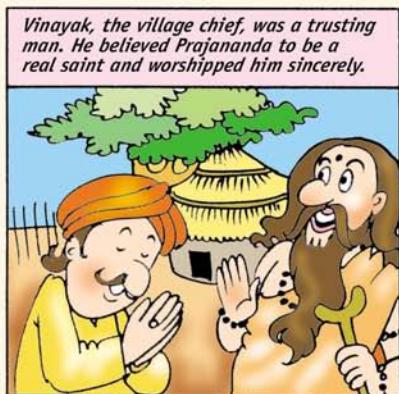
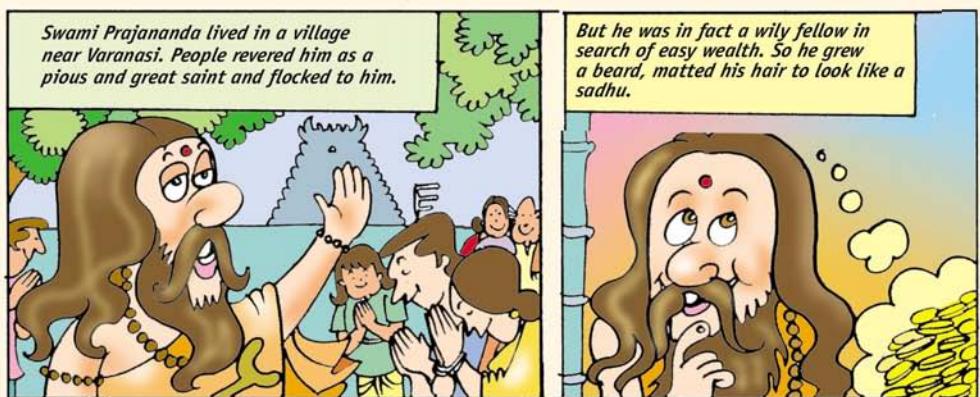
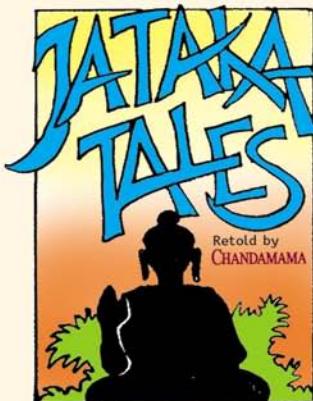
The pines grow on the next hill—the chir, the Himalayan blue pine, and the long-leaved pine—but there is a small blue pine a little way below the cottage, and sometimes I sit beneath it to listen to the wind playing softly in its branches.

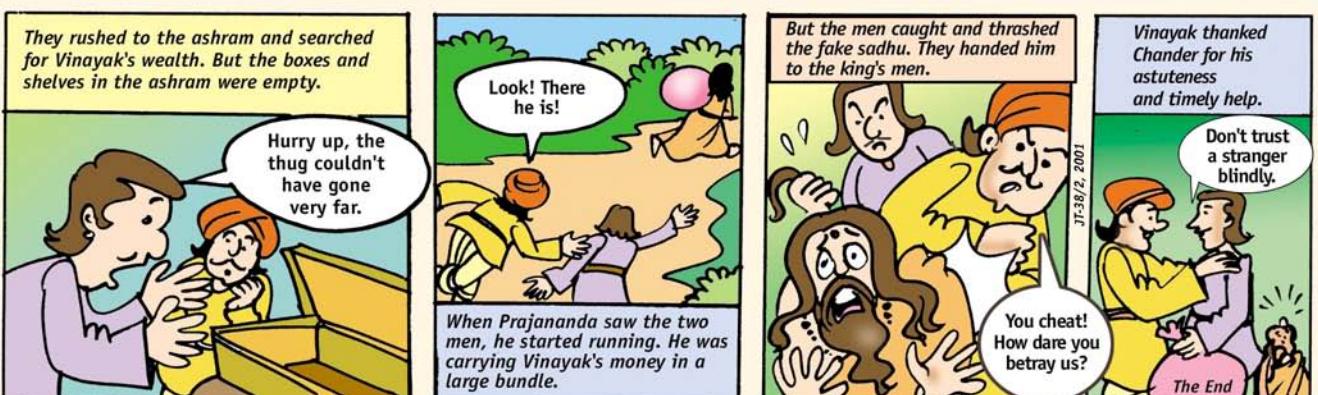
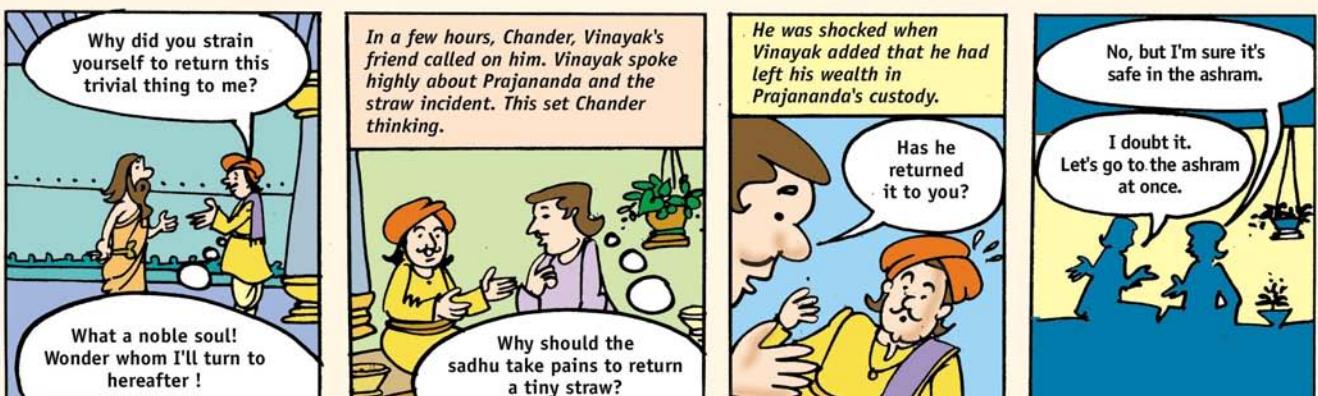
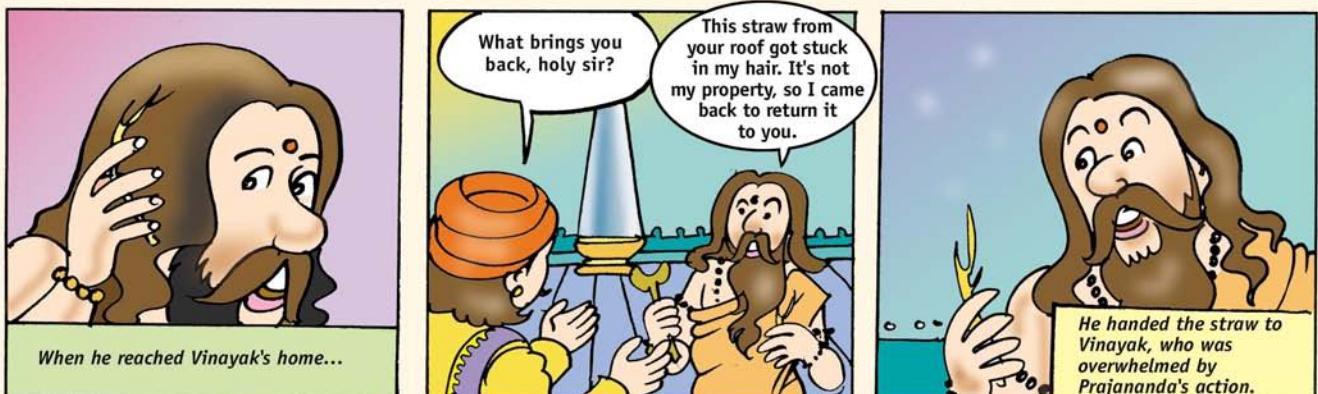
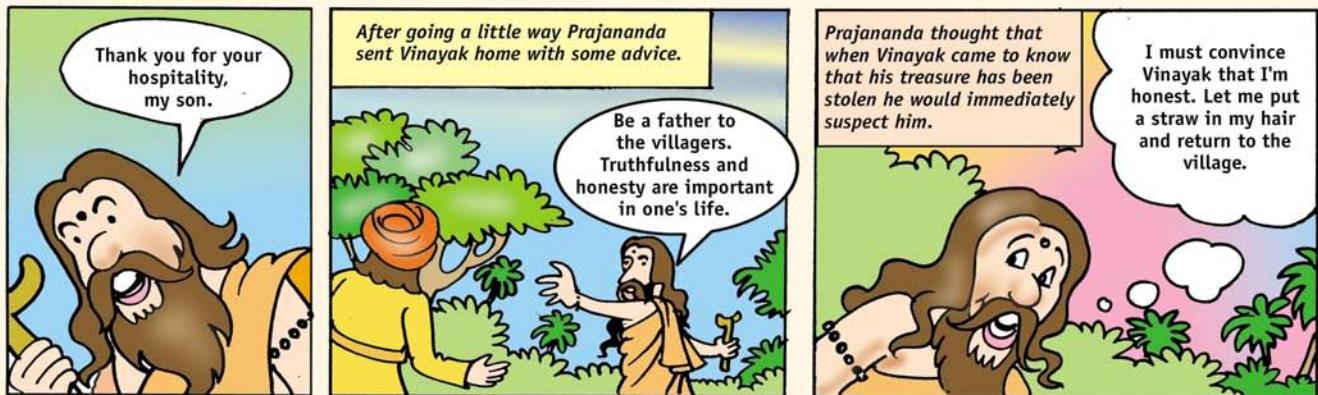
Open the window at night, and there is usually something to listen to, the mellow whistle of the pygmy owl, or the cry of a barking-deer which has scented the proximity of a panther.

Sometimes, if you are lucky, you will see the moon coming up, and two distant deodars in perfect silhouette.

Some sounds cannot be recognized. They are strange night sounds, the sounds of the trees themselves, scratching their limbs in the dark, shifting a little, flexing their fingers. Great trees of the mountains, they know me well. They know my face in the window, they see me watching them, watching them grow, listening to their secrets, bowing my head before their outstretched arms and seeking their benediction.









THE PREACHER LEARNS HIS LESSON

The renowned religious scholar was never tired of preaching to people the greatness of his religion. With great zeal he travelled from country to country, sometime by land and sometime by sea, held meetings and taught his audience how to pray. He believed that unless one followed the right method for prayer, one did not benefit by it.

The king of his country, who subscribed to the same faith, was much impressed by his art of preaching. He placed a ship with a knowledgeable crew at his disposal so that he could sail to distant lands and islands spreading the great faith. The preacher was much pleased with his own mission.

Once when he was returning home by his ship after preaching in a distant continent, the captain of the ship drew his attention to a small island. "Your Holiness, this island is inhabited by only three recluses. I saw them on more than one occasion while stopping by their shore for collecting drinking water. There is a spring with sweet water and several fruit-bearing trees. The three recluses are satisfied with what they get. They rarely talk to strangers who are also rare. I see them sitting in silence or praying. I wonder how they live without any help from anybody."

"It is time we went to help them!" said the preacher. "Will you mind stopping at the island?"

"It will be my privilege to do as you say, Your Holiness," said the captain.

As the ship approached the island, the preacher could see the three old men, scantily clothed, staring at the ship, their long white beards flowing in the wind. The preacher felt pity for them. "How many years have they wasted following incorrect methods of prayer? But God is kind to them and that is why we are here today to teach them the proper way to pray," he told himself.

The three men stood still while the preacher went closer to them. "How are you, friends? I hope God has been kind to you!" he said smiling. The three looked at one another, as if unable to understand what the preacher said. When the preacher repeated his observation, one of them said in broken sentences that they did not understand what the gentleman meant by God being kind to them. Could He be unkind, too?

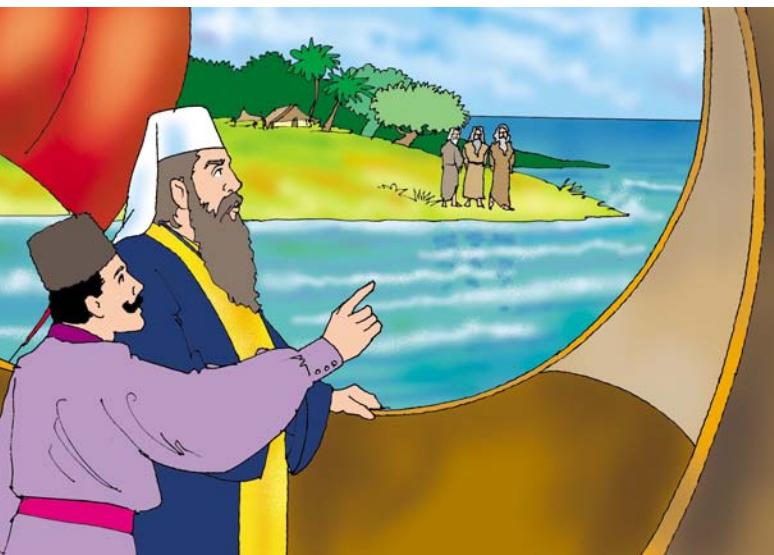
The preacher felt embarrassed. Indeed, there was profundity in what these weird fellows said. But he also suspected that they did not quite know what they said. What sounded like wisdom could simply be their ignorance. However, he must do his duty. He must teach them the method and the sacred words of prayer.

"Friends, I understand that you pray. What method do you follow?" he asked them.

Again they looked at one another. Obviously they followed no method. After much questioning the preacher understood that they kept telling God, while sitting or walking or sleeping, "God, you are and we are."

"Is that all?" asked the preacher, laughing. "Friends, let me tell you how best to pray – the prayer that will bring you peace and power."

The hermits did not say anything, but surely they had no objection to learning from the preacher.



So, the good preacher spent an hour showing them the right posture for meditation and making them repeat some words from scriptures which should be their prayer. When he was sure that they had learnt them, he resumed his voyage, satisfied that he had done a fine job.

To the captain he said, "It is like sailing through the waters. Unless one knew the way to the destination, one would go on sailing forever, reaching nowhere!"

"Right, Your Holiness, right. The poor recluses would have gone on with their vague efforts without any result all through their remaining days, but for your kindness," said the captain, sure that he himself had been richer by his close contact with the preacher. He was also proud of the fact that he had led the great man to the island; he was the agent for the spiritual benefit that would come to those three ignorant mendicants.

They sailed on while the sun set and by and by all became dark. But a heavy storm broke out during the last quarter of the night, so much so the ship tossed on the mountain-high waves, threatening the lives of those on board. The captain and the crew looked grim. After a thunderbolt that was about to crash on the ship but slipped away narrowly, the captain told the preacher, "Your Holiness, only your prayers to the Lord can save us. If this sort of turmoil continues for a little more, our fates would be sealed – right under the sea.

The challenge was too great for the preacher to accept. He alone knew that he was not equal to it. But he must do something to generate confidence in the crew. He came out on the deck, braving the strong wind and rain, trying to pray.

Suddenly it appeared to him that the storm subsided at the east. As he looked in that direction, he found that the clouds were abruptly parting, giving way to some tiny objects on the water. In the mild light of the dawn he could see the objects growing in size, coming closer

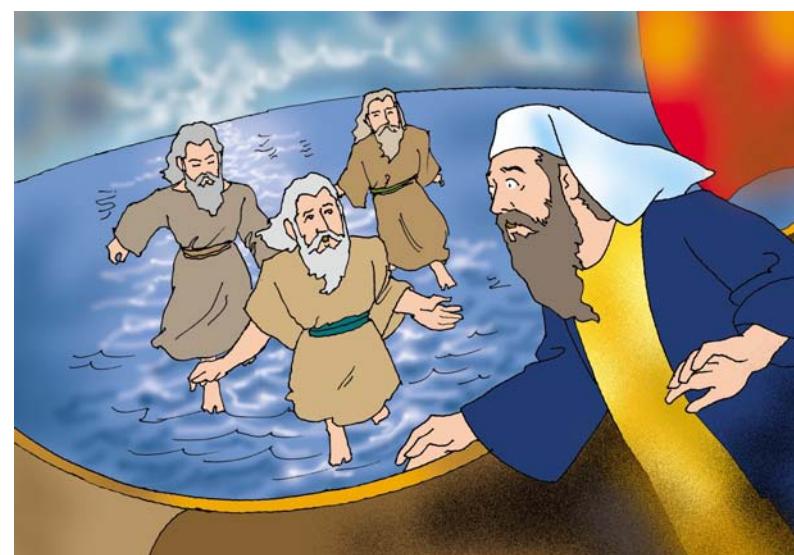


towards the ship. The rains stopped completely and the wind grew gentle. To the preacher's astonishment, the approaching objects looked like human figures. Lo and behold, before long he saw the three recluses coming towards the ship, running on the waves. It is their luminous aura that cleared the sky and calmed the wind.

They stopped the moment they saw the preacher. "Holy man, Sir, we forgot what you taught us. Will you mind repeating them?" they asked, standing on the water, unconscious of the fact that they were doing something incredible. Trembling, the preacher knelt down on the deck. "O children of God, pardon my audacity in trying to teach you. I have received my lesson. Pardon me, O pardon me!" he managed to mutter.

"Thanks," said the hermits as they turned and ran over the waves at great speed, but without appearing to be labouring at all. The preacher prostrated himself on the deck and wept. The captain who did not know what had happened, came out. "What a miracle you performed, Your Holiness!"

The preacher sobbed even more. He alone knew who had performed the miracles – without being aware of it! He wished to show them the correct way to God, without realizing that they lived in God. **-M.D.**



THIS HAPPENED IN SEPTEMBER

The common man, everywhere, always, wants peace. He is happy so long as his basic needs . . . food, clothing and shelter . . . are met.

The leader, too, speaks of peace, but he wants peace on *his own terms*. If not, he goes to war in the name of peace and justice!

That was what Adolf Hitler of Germany did. He was a great orator. He had the gift of the gab and used this gift very effectively to whip up public emotions. He spoke of the Germans as a race apart, a superior race. He argued that the Germans were born to rule. His words struck a favourable chord in the minds of the majority of people.

He also identified, in the Jews, a ready target to prove his theory of racial superiority. He swung against the Jews, spoke of the immense economic power they enjoyed, added that the Jews were responsible for the economic ruin of the majority of people. It was a lie but, it found ready acceptance.

Hitler decried the Treaty of Versailles, signed in 1918 after the defeat of Germany in the First World War, as terribly one-sided. Germany was deprived of its territory,

denied the right to arm itself, and kept in a state of stranglehold. However, till Hitler came on the scene, none could whip up the sense of helplessness among the Germans. He spoke of the insults and the humiliations that Germany suffered by not freeing themselves from the restraints imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, and raised the simmering discontent in the minds of people into a raging fire. His fiery words made him the darling of the masses. He rode the tide of popular support and assumed the office of Chancellor in 1933.

Once he was in power, he set out to weaken the Jews. He imposed restrictions on where they could stay and what profession they could follow, segregated them from the mainstream and made life virtually impossible for them. Many of them chose to emigrate. Those who stuck on paid a heavy penalty when war broke out.

Hitler started rearming Germany. He found allies in Benito Mussolini of Italy and Emperor Hirohito of Japan. Together the three leaders readied themselves to conquer the whole world. In 1936, they decided to test the waters. Mussolini conquered Ethiopia and Germany reclaimed

SECOND World War



Rhineland. Japan got ready to expand her power over Asia and swung in to grab areas that rightfully belonged to China.

The League of Nations, an organization formed after the First World War to maintain world peace, protested. But the League had no real powers. So, the belligerent nations of Germany, Italy and Japan ignored the call of the League. Germany and Italy would have been more restrained if only the two major powers of Europe, England and France, had swung into action. They had the means to check the ambitious plans of Germany and Italy. But they chose to buy peace by shutting their eyes to the activities of the two nations.

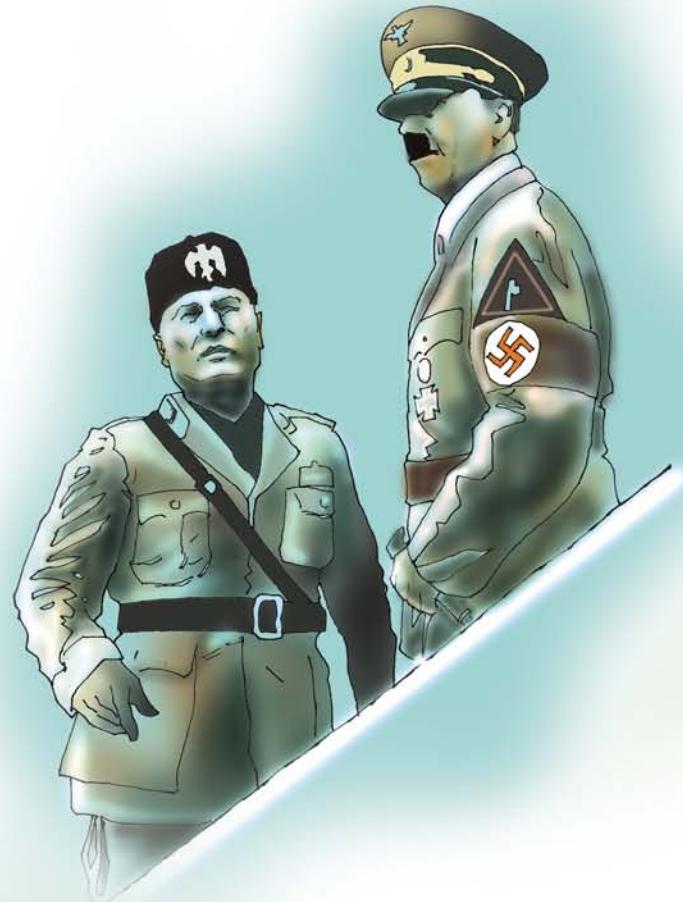
Their silence emboldened Hitler. In November 1937, at a secret meeting, he revealed his plans to his top military commanders. He said the Germans needed more living space. Why not find room in Austria by annexing that nation?

He overran Austria in March 1938 and paused. He waited, unsure how the world would react. Most nations ignored the development. The League of Nations limited itself to sound and fury. Hitler chuckled to himself.

He decided to flex his arm further. He claimed the Sudetenland, the rugged mountain terrain of Czechoslovakia that adjoined Germany. Here lived a large number of people of German origin. Hitler argued that the Germans were not getting their dues. They were ignored, left out.

That was a lie. But Hitler knew how to play up the lie. He said the people would be happier if they were part of Germany. Their happiness, he argued, could not be ignored. He had the responsibility of bringing relief to the Germans in Sudetenland. Could he get what he wanted without going to war? He decided to use diplomacy to strengthen his stand.

He called a meeting in Munich on Sept 29, 1938. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of England, Edouard Daladier, Premier of France, and Benito Mussolini attended. Hitler bluffed his way through. He affirmed that he had no territorial ambitions. Let Germany get Sudetenland and the world would be at peace forever, he said. Hitler offered them peace on *his* terms. Both England and France wanted peace. They buckled down. Sudetenland became part of Germany.



Winston Churchill and a few other political leaders called the Munich Pact a great betrayal of European interests. They felt Hitler was up to no good. Nip the trouble in the bud, they pleaded. But their pleas fell on deaf ears. They were tweaked for being doomsayers. They felt sad. For they knew, for sure, that appeasement only emboldened the aggressor.

Six months later, their worst fears came true. Hitler annexed Czechoslovakia. And almost immediately raised the battle cry against Poland. He found an ally in Stalin, then the Supreme leader of the Soviet Union. The two sealed a pact by which they agreed to run through Poland and divide it between themselves.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler set out on his grand conquest. Major cities of Poland were bombarded. Sixty divisions, with a strength of over 1,250,000 men, closed in on the Polish border. Nine of the sixty divisions held between them about 900 tanks. It was clear now what Hitler had in mind. He was after world dominance. He had to be checked.

Britain and France decided to do that. They dropped the gloves, declared war on Germany on Sept 3, 1939. Thus started the Second World War. - **By R.K. Murthi**

FOLK TALE

UTTARANCHAL

A bride chooses her bridegroom

Ramswaroop Thakur was the wealthiest man of the place. He was plunged into grief when his wife passed away soon after she gave birth to a baby girl. He tried to overcome his grief by spending all his time taking care of the baby, who soon grew up into a beautiful girl. The Thakur had named her Chameli as she was the most beautiful girl in the village. Her friends used to tell her that she could marry whomever she liked. She was proud of her beauty.

In villages in olden times, the barber was easily the best person who would know about most young men. So, the Thakur called the village barber and asked him to suggest a suitable bridegroom for Chameli. The two got into an animated conversation when the barber began to mention one name after another and discussed the boys' merits and demerits. The Thakur insisted that the boy should be from a middle class family but of noble traits.

Chameli was in the kitchen making *rotis* for their lunch. She overheard the conversation and came out and said, "Father, I'll marry the most powerful man in the village, and not any commoner!"

Both Ramswaroop and the barber were taken aback. They had never expected that the girl would be so frank

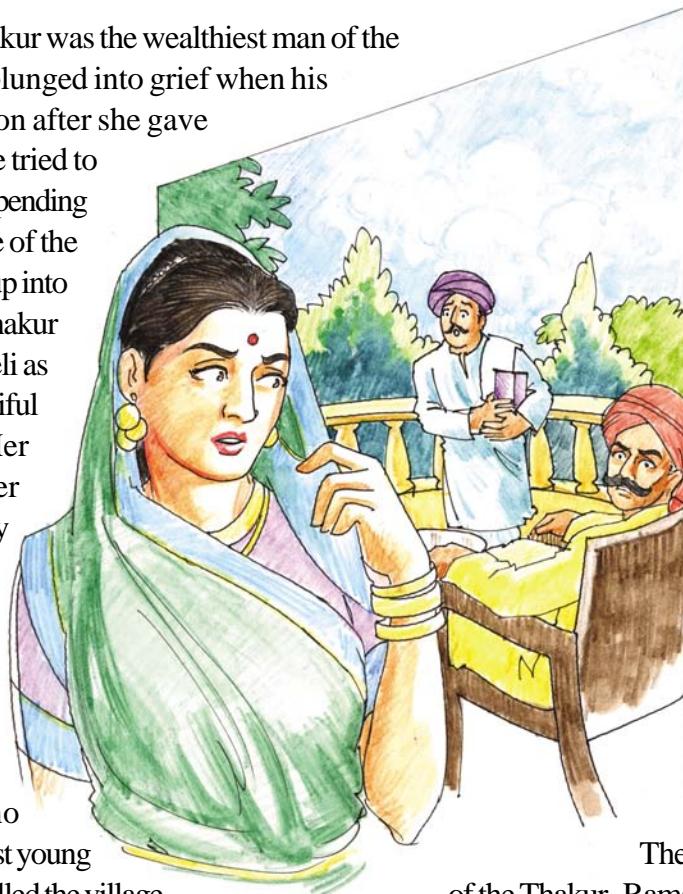
in her views, that too in the matter of her marriage. The Thakur had never done it before, but that day he chided his daughter. "Chameli, it's not proper that young girls should talk about their marriage. That is something which the elders would decide for them, and they have no choice. I'm looking for someone who would be a match for our status."

Chameli was adamant. "Father, I shall not accept anybody chosen by you for my husband. Leave it to me to make my own choice. How can a barber know anything about *my* likes and dislikes?" She then stomped out of the portico and went back to the kitchen.

The barber felt insulted and took leave of the Thakur. Ramswaroop sat there stunned, for some time. As he heard sobs from the kitchen, he thought he would not pursue the issue with his daughter any further. And Chameli, on her part, waited for the evening when she would be left alone after the day's chores had been done.

Throughout the night, she was contemplating a plan of action. She decided that she would leave the house before her father woke up, in search of a powerful man who would be a good husband. She had hopes that she would find such a person and marry him before she went back home.

Morning came and Chameli fetched a pot as if she



was going to the well to draw water. However, she left the pot by the side of the well and walked fast to the main road. She stopped on seeing a procession approaching.

When it came near, she found it was a rich man riding a decorated horse. Some persons walked in front while some more people followed the horse and the rider. There were people on either side of the road hailing him or paying their obeisance.

Could it be the king of the land? she wondered. Well, she had never seen a king in her life and did not know how he would look like. If he was really a king, he would certainly be a very powerful person, thought Chameli. The rider looked handsome and strong-built. Would he agree to marry her?

Chameli followed the procession. Soon it halted as it passed by a pool. The rider had seen a hermit under a pipal tree. He was surrounded by a few devotees, some of whom were receiving blessings from him. The rider dismounted and prostrated before the hermit. When he got up, his attendants had brought flowers and fruits which he offered to the hermit, who blessed him. Thereafter, he continued his journey.

Now Chameli wondered whether the person whom she had taken to be a king was really powerful for, didn't he prostrate before a mere hermit? In which case, the hermit himself must be more powerful, she argued. But she doubted whether the hermit would be willing to marry her. Well, there could be a possibility of her coming across

someone equally powerful like the hermit. She waited near the pond for sometime.

A while later, the hermit was left alone. He collected the fruits and flowers and walked towards a temple nearby. She slowly followed him. She saw him offering the flowers and fruits to an idol, after lighting the lamp. Then he came out and circumambulated the temple. After that the hermit went away. Now Chameli thought that the deity in the temple must be more powerful than the hermit.

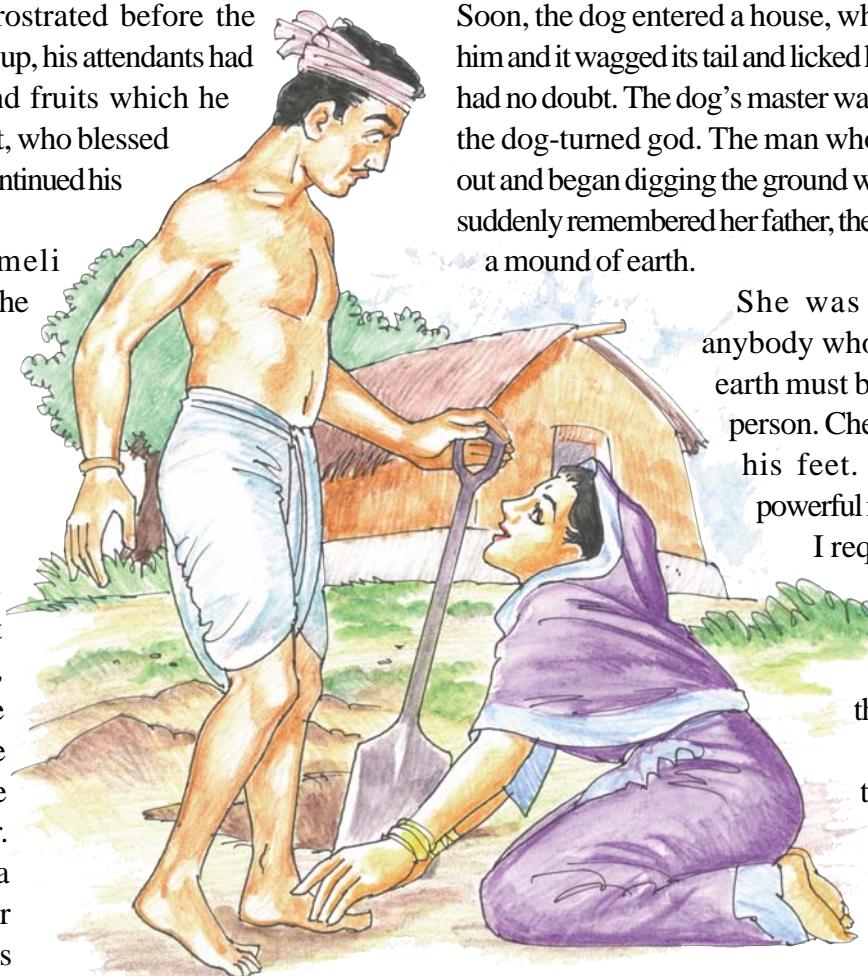
She gave up all thoughts of marrying the hermit and decided that she would consider the deity as her husband and remain in the temple serving the deity as her wedded lord. She sat cross-legged, eyes closed, hoping it would take some human form. When she opened her eyes she saw a dog eating all the food that had been offered to the deity. Had the deity assumed the form of a dog? In which case, she would not mind taking the dog as her husband.

The dog sauntered out and Chameli followed it. Soon, the dog entered a house, where its master petted him and it wagged its tail and licked his feet. Now Chameli had no doubt. The dog's master was more powerful than the dog-turned god. The man who was a farmer, went out and began digging the ground with a shovel. Chameli suddenly remembered her father, the Thakur, worshipping a mound of earth.

She was now certain that anybody who could dig the hard earth must be the most powerful person. Chameli went and fell at his feet. "You're the most powerful man in this village and

I request you to take me as your wife. I shall take care of you and the earth that belongs to you.

The farmer listened to her story and then looked at her beautiful face and said, "Chameli, I accept you as my wife!"



Kittens in My House

It was only when I heard their first ever 'meows' that I became aware of their presence in my house. Their meows sounded pitiful. Perhaps they were hungry and their mother was not with them then; thinking so, I tossed the morning paper aside which I was reading then, and rose from my chair and headed for the back door from where their pitiful cries had emanated.

Their mother was indeed not with them when I reached there. But presently I saw her coming. Seeing me standing so near her young ones, she stopped short and eyed me as if she wanted to know what I was up to. In response, I gently stepped aside to give her way. But she did not move. Standing stock-still in her place, she kept eying me warily for some seconds. Then, when she became sure (I presume) enough that I was not there to harm her young—or her, for that matter—she approached her young.



The kittens were very hungry indeed! For, when she reached them, they started jostling for her milk. There were three of them in all. All very cute—as kittens usually are; but each pitifully thin.

Even though I am an ardent lover of animals in general and have from time to time in the past kept animals as pets in my house, I am not that fond of keeping cats. Needless to say, therefore, that the kittens' mother was not my pet: she was a stray. Yet I knew her 'quite' well because she had been frequenting my house and raiding the larder once or twice well-nigh every day for quite some time.

When I had first seen the kittens they were too young to move all by themselves out of the cozy lair-like place in the backyard of my house where their mother had kept them hidden from the danger of being harmed or killed by other creatures. In such conditions, it was only natural

for me to feel obliged, out of my humaneness towards and love for all creatures, to play host to these little, helpless, though uninvited, guests in my house, until at least they were old enough to move out, and fend for themselves.

However, as soon as the kittens were old enough to move out of their hiding place, they started exploring their immediate world: that is, the interior of my house, which soon became their veritable home. All three of them now roamed all over the house undisturbed all day long—including my study; meowing and exploring out of curiosity, as they moved, with their paws and mouth anything and everything that came in their way.

They were all very fidgety and, as I soon discovered, very playful and mischievous as well—as the younger animals mostly are. They did a lot of mischief, especially in the early morning and early evening, and seemed to take special pleasure in displacing things, like duster, rags and socks. Often they even made holes in socks and other clothes with their little yet very sharp claws.

Raiding the larder, as their mother did, scattering food items in the kitchen and upsetting the milk pot and spilling the milk on the floor were some other things they indulged in frequently. At times, one, two, or even all of them stole into my bedroom at night and startled me by suddenly jumping on my bed when I was sound asleep.

So, with no interference to speak of from me or other members of my family, they were almost at liberty to do whatever they liked and whatever pleased them.

Initially, all this (mischief of theirs) used to annoy me, but soon I learnt not to mind them at all. And why shouldn't I? After all, what was mischief to me was an essential part of their growing up.

Their presence in my house, though troublesome and at times even pestilential, had however proved a great boon to me and my family, in that all the rats and mice had disappeared from my house. And it had now become perfectly rat-and-mouse-proof.

One early morning when I woke up, I found a silence pervading my house: a silence which was unusual for the time of the day considering the mischief the kittens did in the morning every day without fail. It did not take me more than a couple of minutes to discover the reason why it was so: it was because two of them were no more. I found their 'bodies' in the backyard. They had been mauled to death, apparently by one of the stray dogs that lived in the colony streets.

As for the third one, neither it nor its 'body' was there. The sight was disturbing. So I turned my attention away from it and began looking for the third one, wishing at least it to be alive and safe and sound. I soon found it, hiding under the sectional in the drawing room, safe and well but looking frightened. Very frightened indeed! I tried to entice it out from there by offering it some biscuits and milk; but it would not come out. It was too shocked and scared to. It must have witnessed the ghastly event of the night, which snatched its siblings from it.

While I was still trying to coax it into coming out, its mother suddenly appeared from the postern, meowing slowly and plangently. Perhaps she had by now seen the



'bodies' of her two kittens, and had come here looking for the third one. Hearing its mother's meows, the kitten eventually emerged from its hiding place, meowing. It went to her and snuggled its head between her front legs. She responded by starting licking it fondly, while I looked on.

As I watched them, the mother cat looked up at me for a little while with sorrowful eyes, as if (she were) asking me, "You know who killed my kittens?" She then moved out of the room into the railed-in enclosure of the backyard and from there out of the house, her kitten walking at her heels. (She never returned with her kitten again. She must have felt, my house was no longer safe for her surviving kitten.)

I mourned the death of her kittens and felt a deep sadness for her as I watched the two of them disappear from view, behind the backyard fence. They were very sorrowful moments for me; I felt as if I had lost something too, along with her. I couldn't help but curse whichever canine had killed them. 'Why did it kill them at all when it was not going to feed on them?' I wondered: did it do so just for the fun of it? Or because killing cats at sight is intrinsic to the nature of the animal? Whatever the reason, by killing them mercilessly, it had snatched from their mother two of her exceedingly cute, perfectly innocuous, poor little kittens.

- Sanjay Srivastava

Science Fair

September born—Faraday

Who else can one think of than the all-time great Michael Faraday when one recalls the names of great scientists born in September? His contributions to human progress are many.

Faraday was born on September 22, 1791 in Surrey, England, as the son of an ailing blacksmith, who had ten children in all. Young Michael could only learn to read and write before giving up school early in life.

At 13, he had to earn his living as an apprentice at a book-binding shop. The job provided a golden opportunity for him to quench his insatiable thirst for knowledge. He was an avid reader; the job of binding big books of knowledge whetted his appetite for reading. Among the books was an encyclopedia. An article on Electricity in it evoked his imagination and inspired him to probe further into the subject.

With his employer's consent, Faraday began to attend the then famous scientist Sir Humphrey Davy's popular science lectures at the Royal Institution. He took copious notes and illustrated them with diagrams; he bound them and presented the book to Davy. Greatly impressed, Davy appointed Faraday as his assistant. At 34, he succeeded Davy and became the Director of the laboratory and at 42, Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution.

Faraday generated electricity with the use of a permanent magnet; this is considered "the greatest single electrical discovery in history"; thus he was the inventor of the first electric generator which paved the way for blessing humanity with the supply of electric power. The scientific community honoured him by naming two different units of electricity as *faraday* and *farad*. The name Faraday will ever remain etched in human memory as the giver of electric power to mankind.



Genetically Engineered Bacteria

Did you know that an Indian scientist in the U.S.A. was the first to create a strain of bacteria by the process of genetic engineering and got a U.S. patent for it?

In 1972, Ananda M. Chakrabarty, a microbiologist working with General Electric, created man's first genetically engineered bacteria capable of breaking down crude oil. The granting of a patent to Chakrabarty was challenged in Court because till then it was thought that life in any form should not be patented. Eight years later the American Supreme Court decided that the scientist be granted the patent.

Science Mission to Saturn

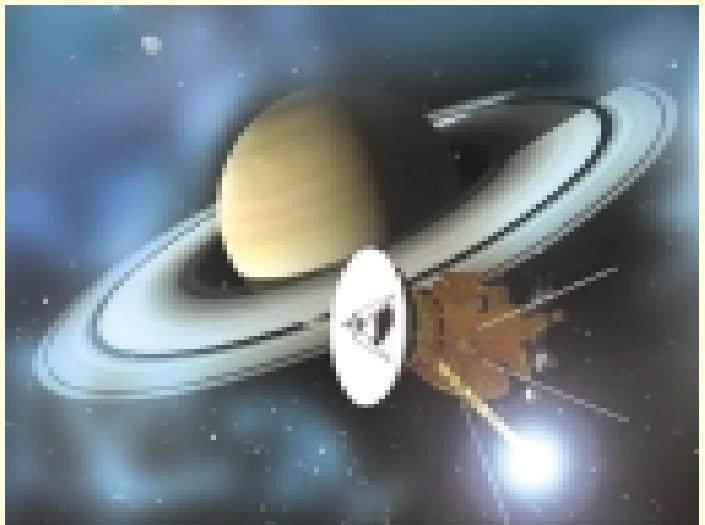
After seven years in orbit, a spacecraft launched by NASA entered an orbit around Saturn and began sending a series of remarkably clear and beautiful pictures of the planet and its mysterious system of rings and its dozen or more satellites including Titan, the largest moon in the solar system. This happened on June 30.

Through a series of very carefully calculated manoeuvres performed by the NASA scientists and engineers, the spacecraft first went up through a gap between two of Saturn's lustrous rings, then rotated, fired its engine for 95 minutes to slow down, again rotated and descended through the gap into a near-perfect orbit around the planet. The spacecraft was at that time, about 1,400 million km away from the Earth. The Cassini-Huygens Space Mission thus achieved one of its many important goals.

The Mission is named after two great astronomers; its spacecraft is called Cassini and the probe is called Huygens. It was Huygens, the Dutch physicist-astronomer who, then only in his

twenties, discovered Titan, Saturn's largest moon, also the largest in the solar system, and who was the first to recognize that a system of rings surrounded Saturn without touching the planet. This was in 1655. (Galileo had earlier discovered the rings but had no idea about them.) It was the Italian-French physicist-astronomer, Cassini, who discovered in 1674 four new moons of Saturn and in 1675 observed the gap in the planet's ring system.

The Cassini-Huygens Mission is intended "to gain a better understanding" of Saturn, its atmosphere, magnetic field, radiation belt, its spectacular rings, its principal moon, Titan, and its dozen or more other moons or icy satellites. Cassini spacecraft has 12 instruments and the Huygens probe has six, to perform detailed studies of the Saturnine system.



Science Quiz

1. What launches a spacecraft into space?
a) Rocket, b) Diesel engine,
c) Gravity, d) Jet engine
2. Which kind of mathematics does the computer use in its operations?
a) Binary, b) Decimal, c) Boolean, d) All
3. Who is the founder of nuclear research in India?
a) M.V.Saha, b) H.J.Bhabha, c) Raja Ramanna,
d) A.P.T. Abdul Kalam.
4. Of the following, which one converts chemicals into electricity?
a) Battery, b) Iron, c) Toaster, d) Windmill
5. Which is the most common element on the earth's crust?
a) Oxygen, b) Aluminium, c) Silicon, d) Iron

Answer: 1. (a) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (a) 4. (a)

"Life does not cease to be funny when people die any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh."
— George Bernard Shaw



A man started work at the Reception of a hotel. The manager told him to greet the visitors by their names.

"How will I know what their names are?" asked the man.

"From the names on their suitcases," said the manager.

When the first guests arrived, the man said, "Good morning, Mr and Mrs VIP Alfa!"

Dushtu Dattu

Dattu is playing with his younger cousin, Tarun.

Dattu bhaiya, can I fly like Superman?

Sure. Just climb on that window-sill, flap your arms hard, and jump!

After Tarun follows the instruction...



Hearing the commotion, Dattu's mother comes running.



I was just teaching him not to believe everything which others tell him, Mummy!



Laugh till you drop!

Mother: "Why are you home from school so early?"

Son: "I was the only one who could answer a question."

Mother: "Oh, really? What was the question?"

Son: "Who threw the eraser at the Principal?"



ବସନ୍ତରେ

Attending a wedding for the first time, a girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white colour?"

"Because white is the colour of happiness and today is the happiest day of her life," her mother tried to explain her.

The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So, why's the groom wearing black?"

ବସନ୍ତରେ

A baby elephant who, one morning, saw a mouse for the first time, exclaimed, "What a small weak creature!" "No wonder I look so. I was sick and so did not touch my dinner last night," explained the mouse.



ବସନ୍ତରେ

CHANDAMAMA

PRESENTS

KALEIDOSCOPE

THE SELFISH BATS

A long time ago there was a quarrel between birds and animals. All birds came together and fought the animals with their might, while the animals, too, gave a fierce battle.

The bats were indecisive. They thought, 'We can join the birds as we can fly, and we can join the animals as well because we, too, have legs. Anyway, we'll wait and join the winners.'

At one time, the birds had a winning hand. The bats thought, 'This is the time; we'll join with the birds.' But lo! the fortunes changed. The animals came out to be more powerful. The bats now shifted their support to the animals.

After a long time, the battle ended and the birds and animals came to a compromise. But, both the bird and animals neglected the bats.

And the bats now began to live in holes. They came out only during the night because that was the time when birds and animals would have returned home to get some sleep.

(Moral : A fair weather friend is often ill-accepted)

- M.V. Sai Aparna (13), Hyderabad



The story "My expedition to Mars" that appeared in Kaleidoscope (August 2004) was sent by M. Shravanth Vasisht (13) of Mysore, and not as printed. The error is regretted. — Editor



MY GRANDMOTHER

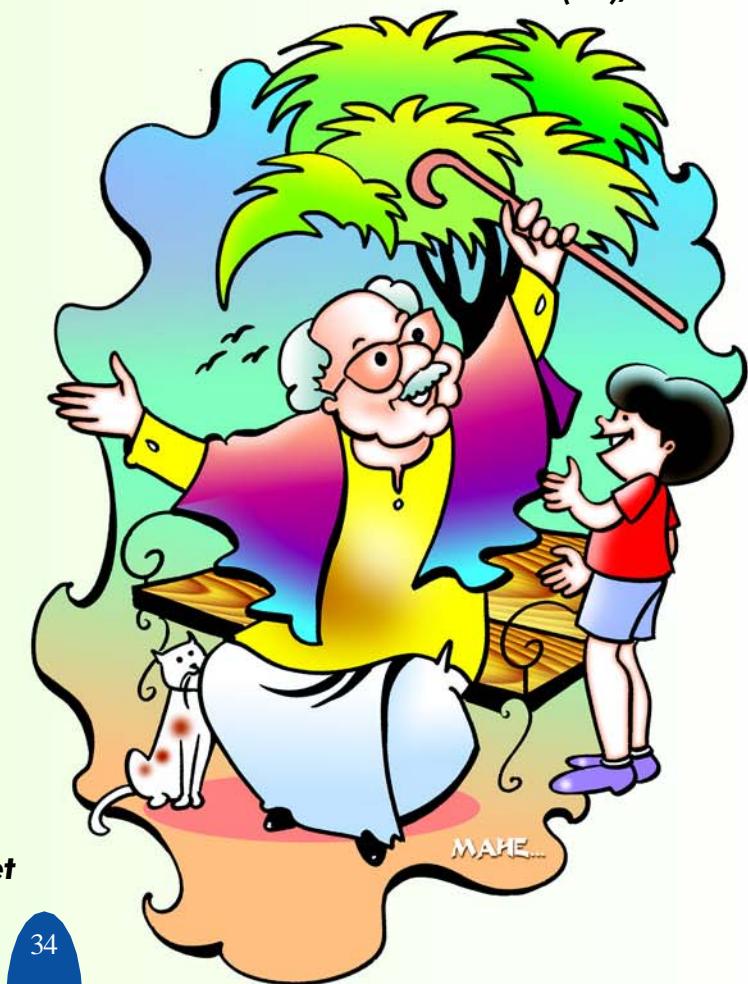
Being with her was a pleasure
 She was loving, caring and daring,
 There was never a moment with her
 Which was dull and boring.
 She would make good dishes
 Getting all good wishes,
 We would get all the riches
 By Grandma's good luck wishes.
 Me and my cousins
 Cry night and day,
 How happy we were
 Before God took her away.
 She is now no more
 But she will always be in our hearts,
 Looking very good,
 Slim, trim and smart.

Nandita Menon (11), Delhi

THE JOYS OF AGE

No more responsibilities for me
 I can sit in the shade
 Reliving the good old times -
 Letting bad memories hide.
 I can enjoy my children's children
 Without a parent's pain
 Though I spend hours with them
 The pleasure does not wane.
 I go to bed any time I please
 Talk to strangers without unease
 Give bold advice to those younger than me
 And generally have a real old timer's spree.

G.R. Venkatesh (12), Jaggayyapet



Joginder got the job of a prison guard. **The Superintendent cautioned him** : "It's a tough job; you will be dealing with criminals all the time.



Joginder : That's okay, sir. I'll teach them discipline easily.

Supdt. : How will you do it?

Joginder : If they don't listen to me, out they go!

C. Shreeja (13), Tuticorin

Ramesh : Do you know how cool it is in Antarctica?

Raju : No. How cool is it?

Ramesh : The people there get into the fridge to get warm.



Son : Father, someone has come asking for a donation for a swimming pool.

Father : Give him a bucket of water.



G. Ramsri Goutham (12), Wanaparthy

Teacher : Hari, what's the meaning of surname?

Hari : Well, it is sir's name, Ramgopalchari!

K. Krishnaveni Devi (14), Kakinada



Raghu (flashing his report card) :

Mother, I got first rank in the class this time.

Mother : Good, keep it up.

Raghu (standing on a stool to reach the top shelf of the showcase) : Mother, I'm keeping the card here.



N. Saiprashanth (6), Mysore

Rajeev : (To Maths teacher) Sir, please tell me how much marks I got for Mathematics.

Teacher : Subtract 5 from 10, add 15 and subtract 20 from it.



Prashanth (12), Alike

RIDDLES



1. Which is the biggest ship in the world?

**Ve. Kaaviya (10),
Chennai**

2. What goes on and on with an eye in the middle?



3. Which month of the year asks you to go forward?



4. Which tree do you have in your hand?

N. Sai Prashanth (6), Mysore

5. Which is the most dangerous city?

6. Which is the fastest city?

S. Prathusha (11), Chennai

7. Which hand would you use to stir your tea, right or left?



8. Which letter starts with M and ends in Y and has a number between them?

9. The female of an animal is spelt with E in the beginning and end. The word is a palindrome. What is the word?

K. Raghavendra Dev (13), Vijayawada

PARLIAMENT PUZZLE

The names of countries and their parliaments are given below. Try to match them.



1. England	a) Diet
2. USA	b) Reichstag
3. Russia	c) Parliament
4. Japan	d) National Assembly
5. France	e) Congress
6. Germany	f) Supreme Soviet

Santosh N. (12), Bangalore

QUIZ



1. Who was the first U.S. President to visit India?
2. From which year was Sunday declared a holiday?
3. What is the national flower of the United Kingdom?

D. Chaitanya (12), Wanaparthy

Quiz : a spoon

1. Dwight
2. A.D. 1813
3. The rose
4. A
5. D
6. B
7. Neither. Use
8. Money
9. Ewe

Eisenhower

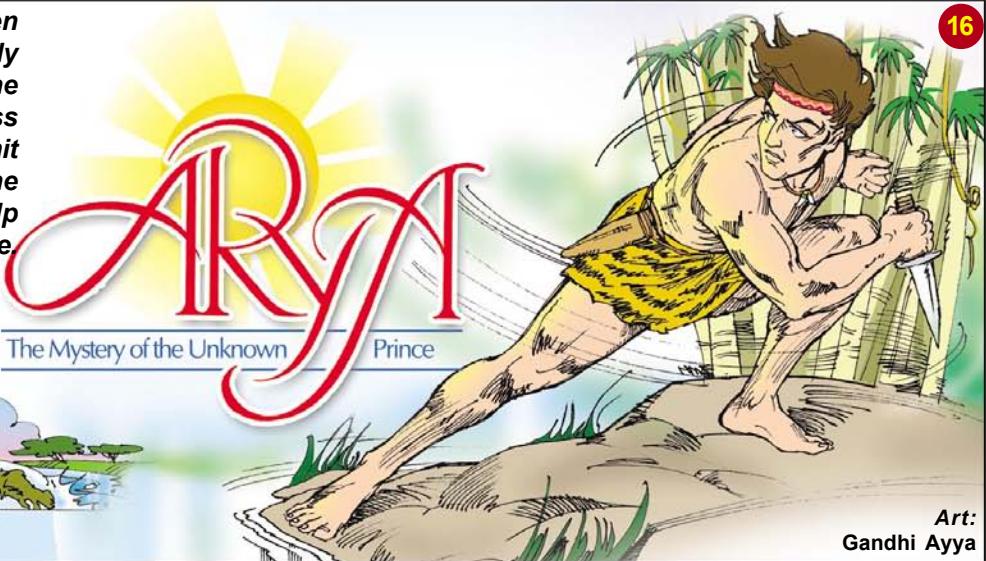
Puzzle :

Riddles :

Answers :

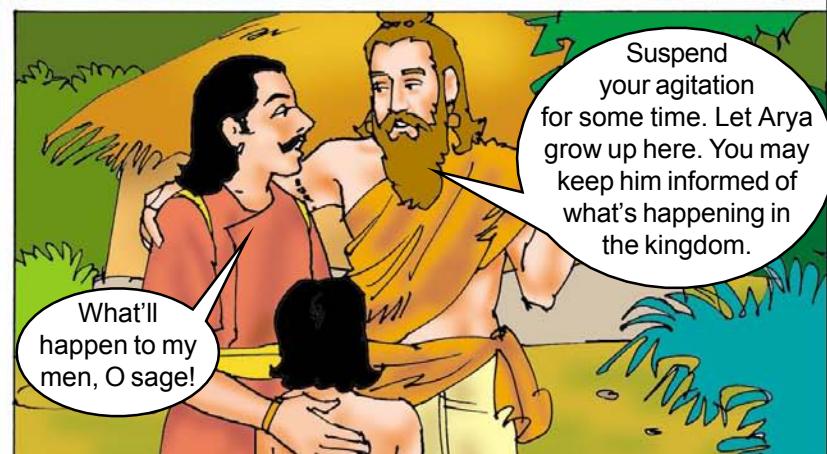
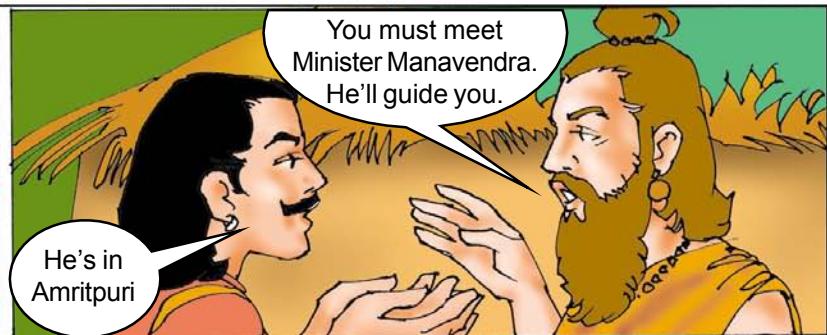
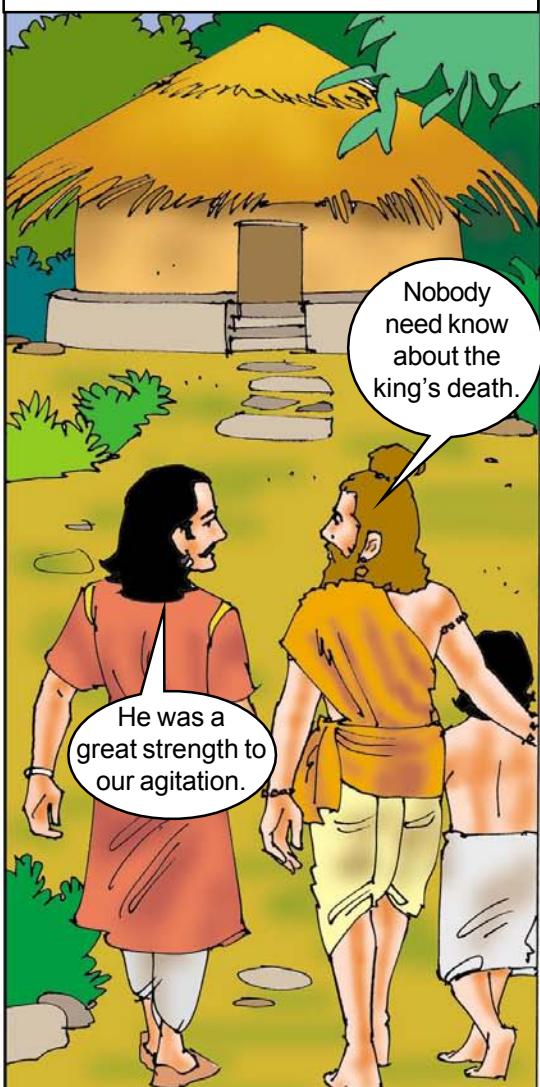
First an attempt on his life, then exile, followed by an untimely death. King Shantidev had one consolation that his motherless son is alive, and safe with hermit Jayanand. He arranges for the burial of the body with the help of Vasant, who meets the prince. They are drawn to each other.

16

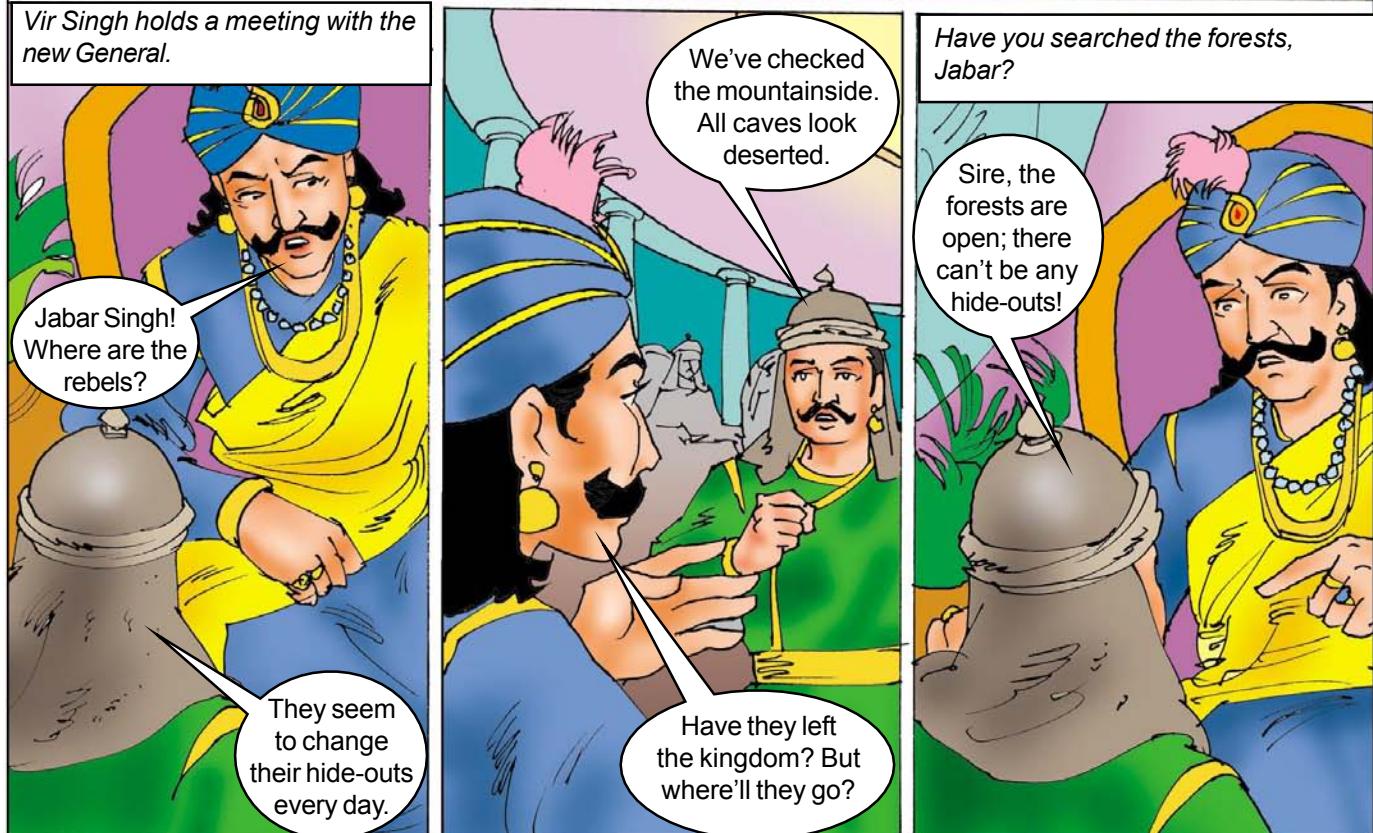
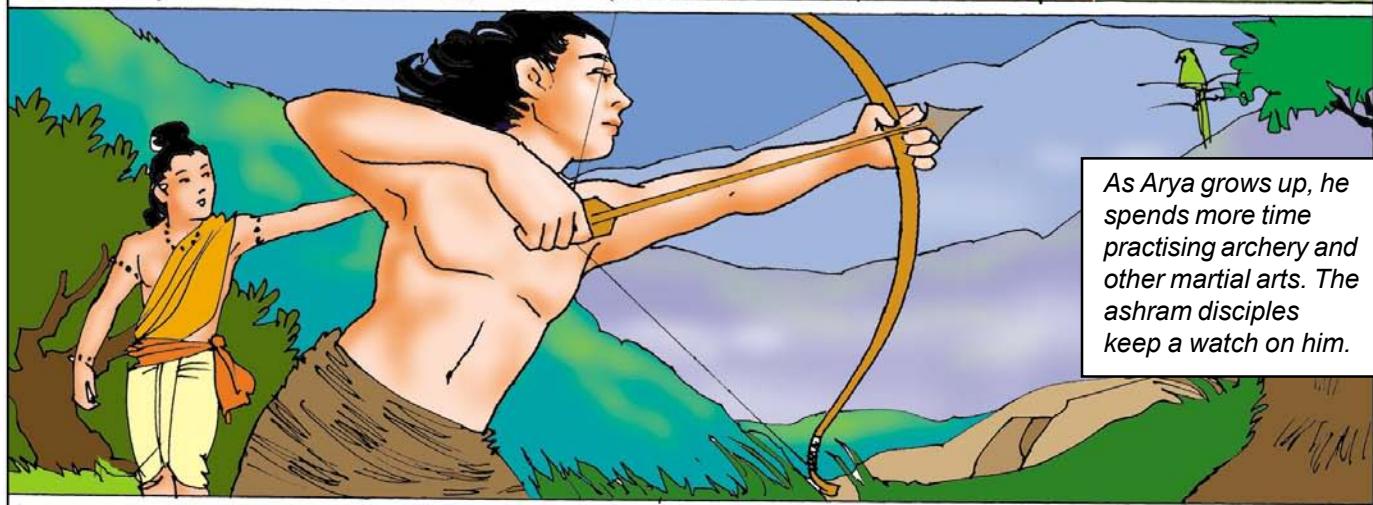
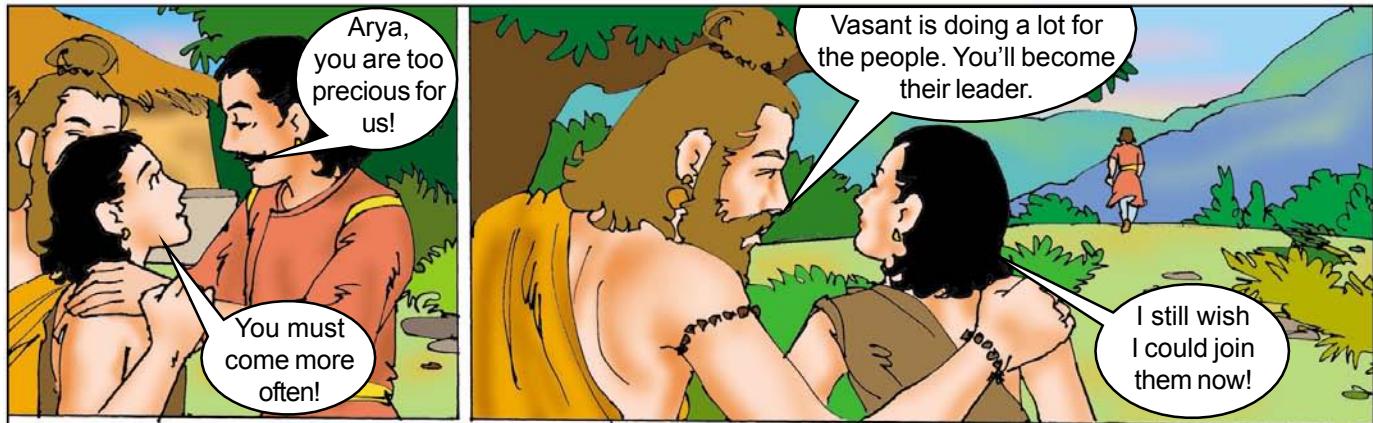


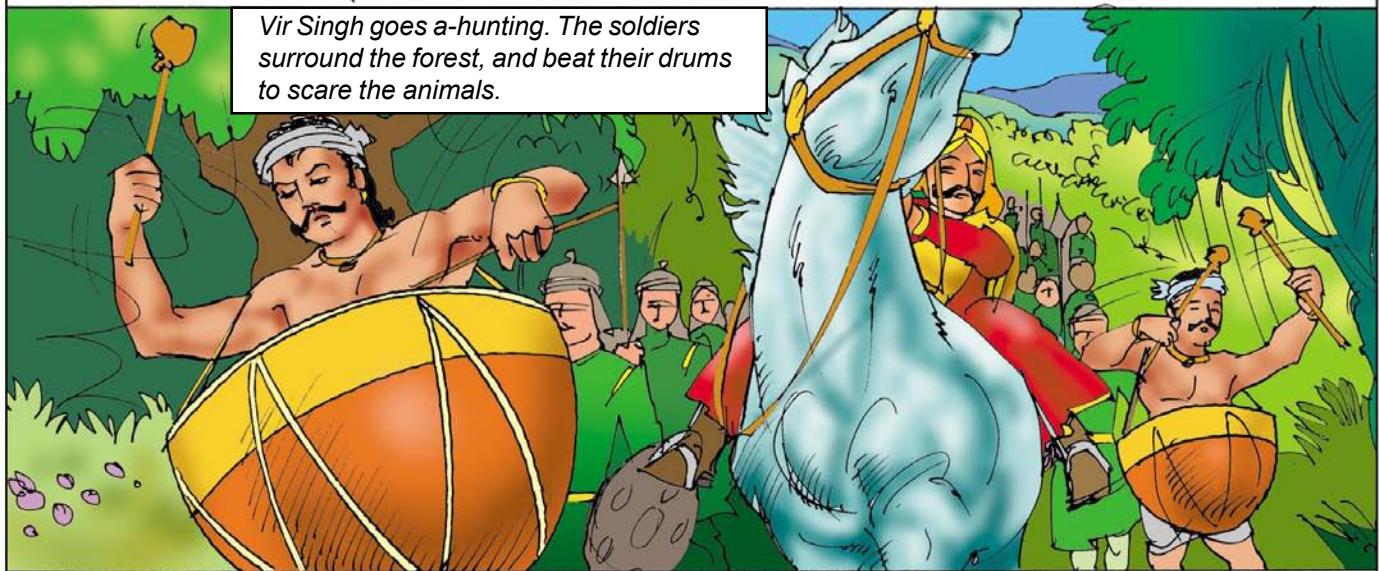
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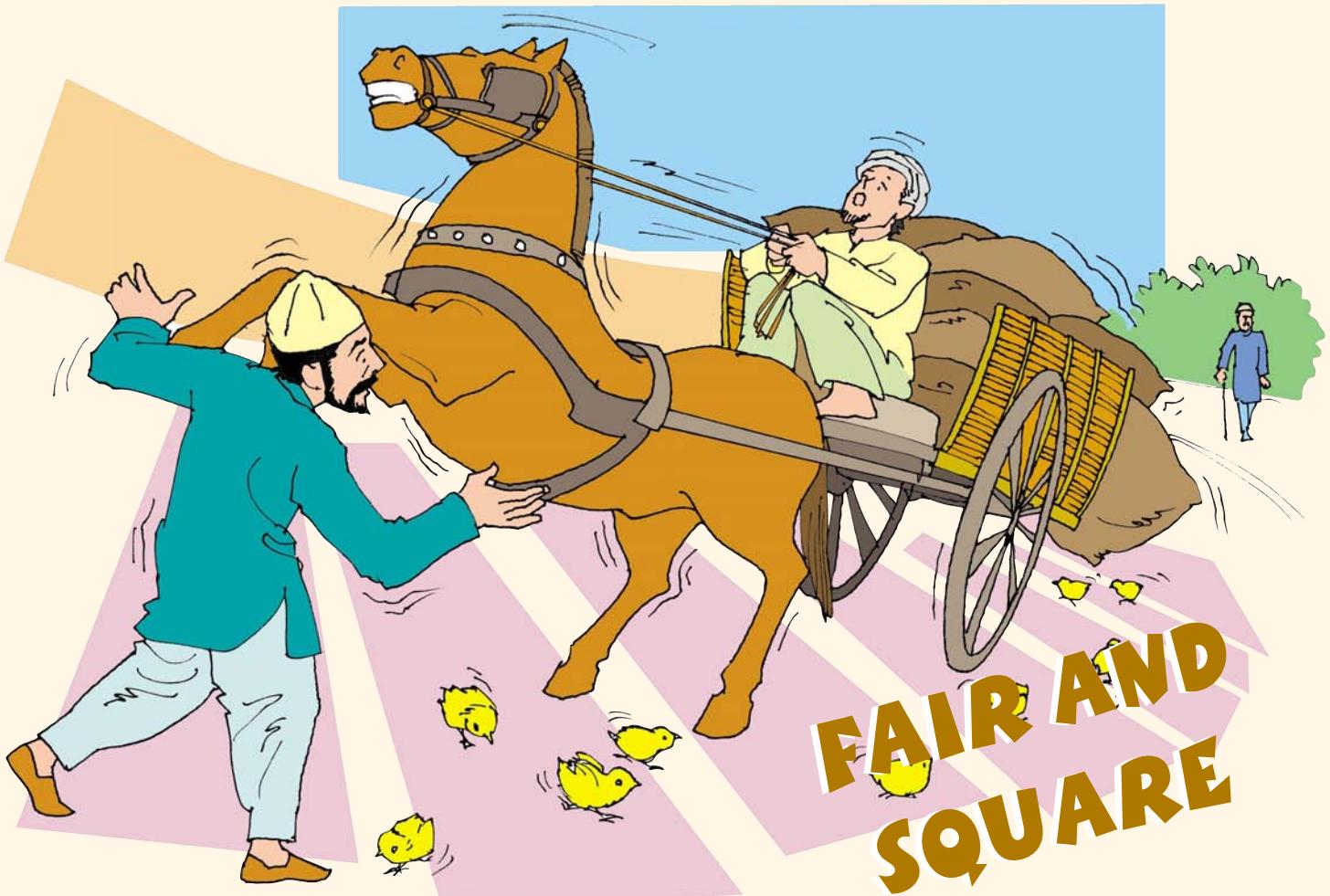
Jayanand and Vasant walk back to the hermitage.











Mulla Nasrudin picked up the walking stick that was his companion every time he went out for a stroll in the morning. He held the crooked end firmly in his clenched fist and stepped out of his house, humming a tune. He held the stick with both hands and swung it wildly. The stick cut through the air and produced sounds of varying decibels. By changing the direction and force of the hit, he could produce any note he had in mind. The music set the pace for his walk that steeled his calf muscles. By swinging the arms, he strengthened the biceps.

He walked along the street that ran in front of his house, took a turn that led to a broader avenue and took in the scene before him. Most of the avenue presented a deserted look. It was rather early for people to be out on the streets.

He hummed a merry tune and walked on. Then his eyes set on a cart, laden with sacks of grain. The sacks swung from side to side as the cart moved over the cobbled street. The farmer, who was at the driver's seat, made all sorts of funny sounds to nudge the horse to move

faster. He cracked the whip in the air every time the horse slowed down. He was on his way to the market where he hoped to sell the grain and make a tidy profit.

The cart was moving at a steady pace when a brood of chicks ran across the road. Behind them came an old villager. The chicks had got away through a small gap in the fence. He had not noticed it. Now that they were out in the open, he had to herd them back to safety. But he did not know how to go about the task. He stood and gaped at them.

The chicks ran wildly in all directions. The farmer gasped when he noticed that a few of them were in the path of the cart. The villager shouted, "Oh, my, my! What will happen to my poor dear chicks now! They will get crushed under the wheels of the cart!"

The farmer, too, had noticed the chicks. Instantly he pulled in the reins. The horse neighed loudly, its front legs rose inches above the ground. Finally it got all its legs firmly on the ground. The cart came to a dead stop.

The chicks heard the neigh and the roll of the wheels

and scurried around, not knowing which way lay safety. The villager who owned the chicks waved his arms, frantically trying to lead them to safety.

Then the unexpected happened. One of the sacks had got dislodged when the reins were drawn suddenly. It slipped and came down on a couple of chicks, crushing them to death instantly.

The villager, who was trying frantically to get his chicks to safety, was taken aback. He saw the dead chicks and turned angrily at the farmer.

“Who will pay me the price of the chicks?” he shouted at the farmer.

“The main avenue is no place for chicks,” the farmer growled.

“The road belongs to all of us. When you drive around, you must be careful,” the villager protested.

“I don’t want to argue with you over such a small matter. Quote the price. And I shall pay it,” the farmer thought he would buy peace. He was in a hurry to reach the market place and make a quick bargain.

“Pay me two shekels.”

“Be reasonable, my friend. That is double the market price.”

“Maybe. But, in two years, these chicks would have grown into a fine hen. Then I would have got the price I quoted.”

“That is loot, daylight loot,” the farmer groaned.

“Either pay the price I demand or I shall take the case to the Caliph,” the man threatened.

The two got into a tiff. They started hurling abuses at each other.

“You are a rogue,” said the farmer.

“You are a scoundrel,” hit back the villager.

“You deserve to be flogged alive,” growled the

farmer. “You must be stoned to death,” bellowed the villager.

Mulla Nasruddin heard the angry exchange of words. He walked across, swinging his stout stick, eager to find out what was the cause of the dispute between the two. As soon as he neared them, he tapped the ground with the butt end of his stick. They heard the sound, stopped abusing each other and turned around to check who was making the pounding notes.

“Mulla Nasruddin!” both of them knew him and took his name almost in one voice.

“Ah, Majid. How are you?” he greeted the farmer. Then he turned to the villager. “And, how about you, Sayyed? Why are you both fighting?”

“Majid’s sack of grain fell on my chicks. Two of them died,” Sayyed complained, pointing out the dead chicks that lay on the road.

“His chicks had no business to be on the road. This is no place for them. Sayyed was careless. He let his chicks out on the road,” Majid groaned.

Before Nasruddin could say a word, he continued, “Still I am ready to pay him the market price of the chicks.”

“So, where is the problem?” Mulla Nasruddin tapped the stick on the ground.

“He wants two shekels,” Majid frowned.

“It is too steep a price,” Nasruddin reacted.

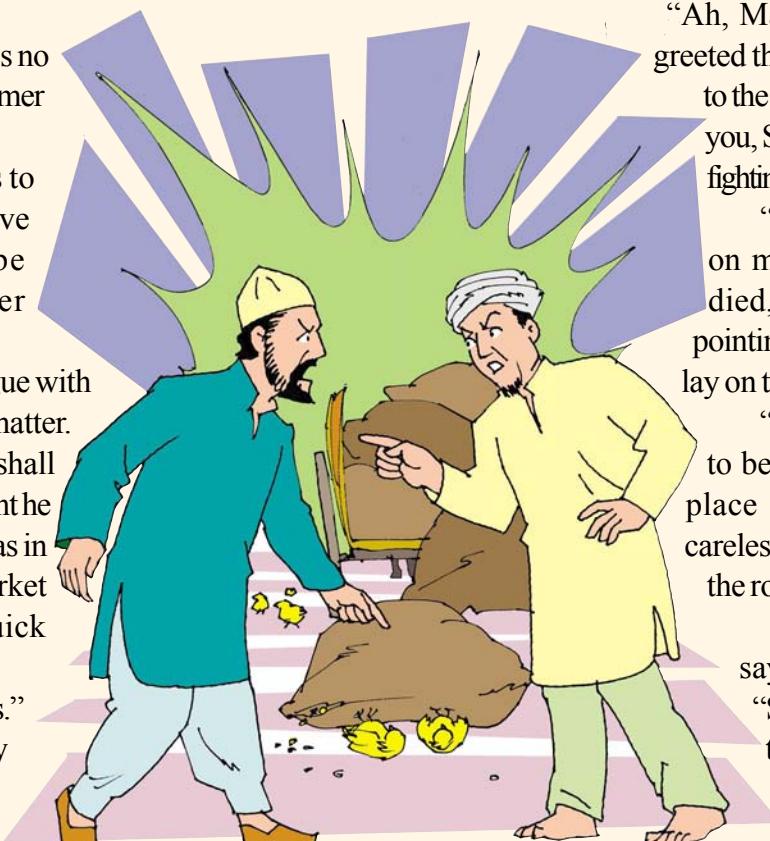
“My friend, you miss one fact,” Sayyed paused.

“Go on,” Mulla nudged him.

“Suppose the chicks had lived for two years, I would have got that price!” Sayyed argued.

“That is indeed true,” Nasruddin shook his head and turned to Majid. “He’s right. Give him the price he asks.”

“I will be ruined,” Majid’s face fell.



"You are very just, Mulla Nasruddin," Sayyed was beside himself with joy.

"You will get two shekels, my friend. You must get the right price. After all the chicks could have grown into stout fat hens in two years," Nasruddin found a smile on the lips of Sayyed and chuckled.

"That is unfair," screamed Majid.

"Wait till I am through," Mulla Nasruddin gently held him by the arm. Then he turned to Sayyed and asked in all innocence, "Please tell me, friend, does a chick turn into a fat hen in two years by itself? Or have you to feed it?"

"What a stupid question? I have to feed it, friend. Feed it for two years and fatten it before I get the price," Sayyed explained.

"How much grain does a chick eat in one year?"

"A quarter sack of grain."

"So, in two years, the two chicks would have consumed a sack of grain. Right?" Nasruddin scratched his chin.

"You're quick at calculations, Mulla," Sayyed grinned.

"Majid, what is the cost of a sack of grain?" Mulla Nasruddin asked.

"Five shekels."

"Good. Now it is clear. Majid, take two shekels, the price you demanded. Pay Majid five shekels that is the price of the feed you would have given to your chicks in two years to fatten them." Nasruddin had a merry twinkle in his eyes.

"I never bought a sack of grain from him," Sayyed chortled.

"I know. But you wanted, for the dead chicks, the price that fat hens fetch. Your chicks would have taken two years to fetch that price. Isn't it just then that Majid gets the price of the sack of grain you would have needed to fatten the chicks?"



The largest item on any menu in the world is probably the roast camel, which sometimes finds a place at Bedouin wedding feasts. What makes it so special is that the camel is stuffed with a sheep's carcass. This sheep, in turn, is stuffed with chickens, which are stuffed with fish, which are stuffed with eggs. Whew - what a mouthful!



"It's unfair. A sack of grain costs more than two shekels," Sayyed sighed.

"Is it fair to ask the price of a fat hen for a chick?" Nasruddin asked.

"I will take the price of the chicks," Sayyed sounded beaten.

"Take it from me," Mulla Nasruddin paid him and picked up the dead chicks.

"It was foolish of me to ask for a hen's price for a chick," Sayyed now saw how unreasonable he had been.

"Mulla, you've been fair," said Sayyed.

"Fair and square too," Majid got back to the driver's seat on the cart.

"Allah be pleased!" Mulla Nasruddin walked off, holding the dead chicks in one hand and the stick in the other, his mouth watering at the thought of the chicken soup his wife would serve for lunch.

READ AND REACT

A NOVEL CONTEST FOR READERS

Cash prize of Rs. 250 for the best entry

Read the story below:

Shankar was the royal cook in the palace of Arjun Singh. He was proud that he was expected to cook food only for the king.

One day the queen sent for him. "My brother is here and he will be dining with the king."

"Your highness, I shall cook food only for the king and not for his brother-in-law," said Shankar. The queen promptly complained to the king. "Your majesty, it's true I told her highness that I shall cook food only for you," Shankar admitted.

"All right," said the king, "suppose I pay you a hundred silver coins as extra wage, will you cook for my brother-in-law?"

Now, you have to imagine what kind of reply the royal cook would have given and what would have been the king's reaction. Keep the following points in mind:-

- ♦ Will the cook be lured by the extra wage?
- ♦ Will the cook stick to his stand?
- ♦ Will the king retain Shankar in his service?

Write your reaction in 100-150 words and send your entry with a suitable title along with the coupon below in an envelope marked "Read and React".

CLOSING DATE : September 30, 2004

Name _____ Age _____ Date of birth _____

School _____ Class _____

Home address _____

_____ -PIN code _____

Parent's signature

Participant's signature

CHANDAMAMA INDIA LIMITED

82 Defence Officers Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.

PRIZE-WINNING 'REACTION'

(Compare with the story that appeared in the respective month)



Mystery of the missing necklace (January 2004)

If Narayan is true to his word, no other question arises. The only possibility then will be for some other servant to have taken the diamond necklace.

If, however, Narayan has taken it, he must have hidden it somewhere. Returning a coin is a simple matter, as it is of less value; also he might have done it just to create his master's faith in him. Rewarding an act of honesty is not bad, but when it is only a part of one's duty, it does not deserve any reward. Ram Thirth must have accepted the explanation of Narayan.

- *Sumeet Mal, Khalisani, Dist. Hooghly (W.B.)*



A Strange Relation (February 2004)

The other pilgrims laughed at their conversation because it seemed that both the young men were out of their minds, and talking to each other, foolishly.

Just then, one of the pilgrims, who became interested in their conversation, quietened all the others and asked the two whether their names were Ram Kumar and Shyam Kumar. The two were zapped to hear their names from a stranger. They were excited to know how he knew their names, and asked together, "Yes, but how did you know? We did not disclose our names to anyone. Neither do we know you, nor you know us; then how on earth did you find out our names?"

Laughing sarcastically, he replied the next moment, "Because, you fools, I'm your father!"

- *Ashwathi Muralee, Mayur Vihar, Delhi.*



The judge's wisdom (March 2004)

The first man said, "Sir, I still swear by God that the ring belongs to me and no one else."

But the second man said, "Sir, I take back my words. I'm not the owner of the ring. He's the owner. Please arrest him as he has stolen the king's ring."

The eager crowd was waiting to see the first man arrested.

But lo! The judge ordered that the second man be arrested, instead. The crowd was stunned.

The judge smilingly said, "I was only probing so that the truth would come out. The king has not lost any diamond ring, really. The second man, fearing the king's punishment, changed his word, whereas the first man, the real owner, stood by his words as he was telling the truth and knew that the king could not be the owner of the ring." The crowd applauded the judge's wisdom.

- *Deepti Shanta Ram, Bangalore.*

A home away from home

Darkness was setting in as we reached the outskirts of the Corbett National Park. Within a few minutes of entering the boundary, we had our first sighting. On the edge of the road, a majestic sambar with its large horns had seen us before we saw it. It was stationary, eyeing us with curiosity.

Our driver very sensibly brought the car to a halt. We were soon rewarded yet again! Slowly, from behind the sambar, a female and two fawns emerged from the thickets. Our excitement was growing. Mayank(10), the eldest of the three kids, who had spotted the sambar first, was feeling extremely proud. After a couple of minutes, the sambar lost interest in us and slowly made his way into the forest. The female and the fawns disappeared behind him. "WOW!" was the unanimous reaction in the car.

Soon, it became pitch dark and since one is not allowed to switch on the lights of the vehicle in the park so as not to disturb the animals, everyone was getting anxious. "Mummy, when will we reach the hotel?" asked little Aranya(4), who was tired after a long day's journey. Even Mayank's brother, Mihir(7), looked a little scared. After all, it is not that every day one is in the middle of a forest after dark with no traffic lights and sounds that we are so accustomed to! "We are not going to a hotel," said Aranya's mother Neema. "We're going to a home stay in a village called Bakharkot."

"But why a home?" asked Mayank. "Aren't there any hotels in Corbett?" Rahul, the boys' father, explained that there are many hotels in the area but this time they were going to do something different. Just as the children were about to protest, we saw a couple waving to us. As we halted, the woman came ahead and welcomed us warmly and introduced herself as Mrs. Rawat, our hostess. In the next minutes, the children and the baggage were out of the car, and we set off for her house. It was dark all around, we couldn't see much of the surroundings despite our torches.

Finally we reached Mrs. Rawat's house which had a huge courtyard in front enclosed by a low wall on all sides. All of us settled on the two *charpoys* in the courtyard and soon after the introductions were made, Mrs. Rawat busied herself with preparing dinner. Meanwhile, we all freshened up and soon, the smell of freshly cooked food wafted through the air.

Dinner was simple but delicious, comprising rotis, dal, vegetable and cucumber raita. The Rawats were wonderful hosts. We ate out in the courtyard in the light of kerosene lamps. "Mummy, look at the stars. There are so many here and they all look so bright and clear," said Mihir. As I was about to reply, Mayank said knowledgeably, "Of course! The sky is so clear because there is no pollution here." Soon we were led indoors and shown around the house.

The house consisted of two rooms which were let out for guests like us, the kitchen which doubled up as our hosts' room and a storage space which one could use as a dining area if one wanted to eat indoors. The toilets were behind the house and were sparkling clean with a 24-hour water supply. Although the facilities were basic, the cleanliness of the place and the warmth of the hosts made us very comfortable. We soon fell asleep listening to the sound of wild boars foraging for food somewhere in the distance.



The next morning we rose at sunrise and stepped out of the house. The beauty of the scenery around us left us speechless. We were actually near the top of a hill which had a gradual slope. There was a valley sloping down gently in front of us where the Rawats had a farm. On one side was a dense forest. We spent the day taking long walks to the surrounding areas, but always heading back to our home-stay for every meal. On our forest walks we saw birds like woodpeckers, buntings and barbets, termite hills, reptiles, and many insects which we had never seen before. We heard the call of a barking deer. The children looked very happy to be here. They seemed to have forgotten their computer games, swimming pools and TV cartoons.

In the evening we headed towards the river which flowed some distance away. During the walk, we suddenly heard a loud whoosh sound overhead and when we looked up, a magnificent pair of the Great Hornbill flew past us. We asked the kids if they were enjoying their home-stay or would they rather move into a hotel. "No, no! We love it here," exclaimed all of them. "I'm so glad you thought of Aunty Rawat's house," added Mayank.

"The idea of staying with Aunty Rawat was to help local people in this area to earn some money," said Neema. "In many places in the country local people are being encouraged and helped to start home-stay facilities. After all, this is their land, which has been conserved by them



and their ancestors over the years. Hotels are usually built by people who are from outside the area. That's why we chose to stay with Mrs. Rawat when we heard of the home-stay programme here," she added.

"It's also important for city people like us to experience life in places like these," said Rahul. "Life is so much simpler here, and it makes us realize how much we consume in our cities," he added.

"Yes, yes, papa," chipped in Mayank, "I'll never complain when there's electricity breakdown during Cartoon Network time!" he said with a glint in his eye.

We soon reached the river and the children's eyes gleamed happily as they entered the water and sat on the edge paddling their feet. After they had played enough and it also began to get dark, the three children asked us, "When will we reach home?" I was thrilled. In a day it had truly become "home" for us!

- *By Sharmila Deo*



The original name of Los Angeles was El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles del rio Porciuncula, which translates to 'The Village of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels of the Porciuncula River'.

Until 1965, driving was on the left side of the road in Sweden. The conversion to right-hand was done on a week day at 5 p.m. All traffic stopped as people switched sides. The time and day were chosen to prevent accidents caused by drivers taking their vehicles in the morning, too sleepy to remember that it was the day of the changeover.



The Fake Notes

Neel and Aditya were busy playing when Neel's father called him. "Neel, I want you to go and post these letters for me. You can buy some comics on your way back," Mr Pal told the two boys, handing them some money and a few white envelopes.

Neel and Aditya, both 10 years old, studied in the same school. They were slowly walking down the market place, glancing at the books and comics displayed in the Book Shop, when Neel collided with two men who were hurriedly walking by. "Oops... oh, sorry," Neel said as the envelopes slipped from his hand and fell down.

"Sorry, sir," Aditya said as he picked up the envelopes. The two men hardly glanced at them as they rushed off.

"Come, we'd better post these first," Aditya said. "Yes, let's do that," Neel agreed, but he stopped in surprise. "Oh no! See one of these is not the envelope Dad gave me," he said, holding up a white envelope. "Aditya, I think one of the men must have dropped it when we bumped into them and you must have picked it up thinking it was one of ours."

"Gosh, yes! Now what do we do?" asked a worried Neel. The two boys looked at the white envelope but there was no address on it. They tried to search for the two men but without any success.

"Let's open the envelope. There might be some address inside," Aditya suggested.

Instead they had a surprise in store for them. There were ten crisp five-hundred rupee notes inside. And only a small scrap of paper with the words "To Jalandhar, Jimmy" written on it.

"Gosh! What a mess! We'd better tell your dad about



this," Aditya said. A while later, Mr Pal was listening to the boys' story. There was a frown on his face. He picked up one of the notes, fingering it, and then held it against the sunlight. "There seems to be something wrong with these notes. I think you boys have stumbled onto something. There are a lot of counterfeit notes in circulation these days, especially five-hundred rupee ones."

"Counter... What does that mean, Dad?" Neel asked.

"Counterfeit notes are fake notes. There are bad people who print these fake notes," Mr Pal said.

"Anyway, I shall get these checked and if my guess is true, we shall have to inform the police," he added.

Nearly a week passed after the incident. Mr Pal's guess proved correct. The notes were fake and the police suspected that the chain involved in the crime was operating somewhere in the town itself.

A few days later, Neel and Aditya were cycling towards the Ice Cream Bar when suddenly Aditya gave a shout. "Look! Over there! Near the flower shop! That man in the red shirt is the one we bumped into that day."

"Hey, I think you're right," Neel whispered. But before the two boys could think of what to do next, the man got into a truck parked nearby.

"Quick. Let's follow him," Neel shouted as the truck sped off. The two boys began cycling furiously behind the truck. Luckily, there was a lot of traffic and the truck could not gather speed. After sometime, the truck turned towards a dirt track and stopped in front of a warehouse. The man in the red shirt entered the building. The boys,

too, stopped. "Aditya, you go and inform Dad. I shall keep a watch on the place," Neel said.

"Okay, but be very careful. They may be dangerous," warned Aditya.

Neel slowly began to walk towards the warehouse, keeping close to the bushes. The place was just behind the big shops in the market and it was difficult to imagine that any mischief was going on here. And who was Jimmy? Was he the man in the red shirt?

The honking of cars could be heard from the road beyond the warehouse. Otherwise, the place seemed to be deserted. The wall surrounding the building was quite high and there was no way he could scale them, Neel thought. Just then he noticed some loose bricks in the wall near him. Shaking with excitement, Neel ran his fingers along the wall. He could remove four bricks.

Neel poked his head through the hole. The wall ran very close to the warehouse and there was a window just in front of him. Neel craned his head upwards, trying to peer inside. There was continuous clanking coming from inside.

Suddenly, Neel got the shock of his life as a large hand grabbed his arms and yanked him sharply out. "Hey, who do we have here? Now if it isn't the same boy who ran away with my money!" said a rough voice, as Neel looked up at the face of the man in the red shirt.

"I didn't steal your money! Let me go.. you're hurting me," Neel said. But the man held him tightly and began to pull him towards the door.

"There were two of you that day. Come on, you'd better spill the beans. Where have you kept the money? And how did you come here? Who sent you here?" the man asked.

Just then another man came out. "Jimmy, something has gone wrong. One of our men has been detained at a shop. We'd better leave this

place," he said. "Okay. Let's pack up. And we'll take this boy along till we get the whole story out of him," Jimmy said, pushing Neel towards the truck.

"Okay, I'll tell you everything. But first, let me sit down. I'm not feeling well," Neel said. He was desperately thinking of some way to stall the men and buy some time.

"I... I've some of the money left. I could not pay my school fees and so when I got the money I thought I could pay with that..." Neel said and started to cry.

"Let me go, please. I'll go and bring back the money, I swear," he added, sniffing. "I think I'm about to get sick," he added for good measure.

"What a sissy you are!" said the man called Jimmy in disgust. "Here, sit down for a moment, I don't want you spoiling my truck. I'll fetch you some water," he said.

Just then, a siren was heard. It was a police jeep. Soon, three policemen rushed inside and caught Jimmy and the other man as they tried to run away. "You rascal! You've tricked us," Jimmy shouted as Neel's face broke into a wide smile.

Aditya rushed in with Neel's father behind him. "Thank God, you boys are safe!" Mr Pal said.

"We have to thank you, sir, and these two brave boys. It was really smart of Aditya to inform us so quickly and of you, Neel, to have detained them here," the

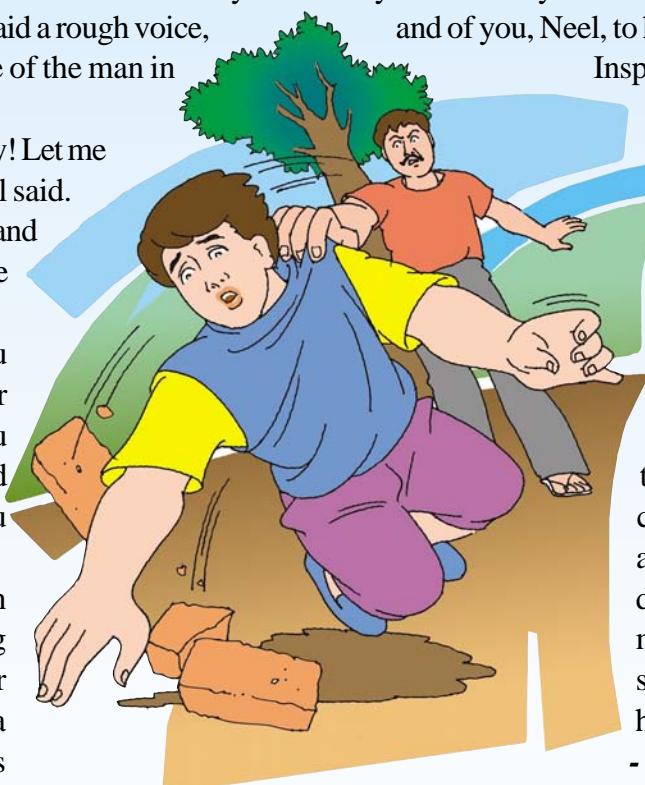
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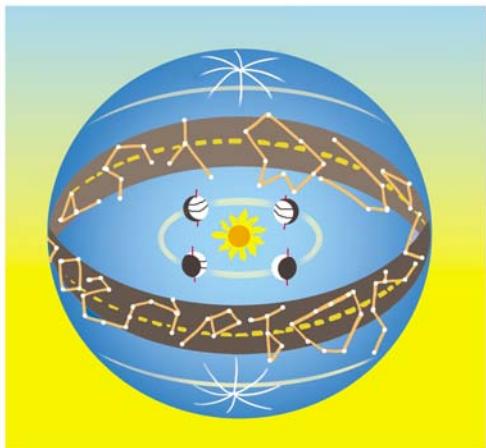
the two delighted boys.

"We're lucky to have nabbed them red-handed. There must be at least one lakh rupees in these boxes!"

"Yes, I'm also really proud of you both," Mr Pal said. Neel and Aditya had another surprise in store for them, for the Inspector had called up their Principal, who announced the boys' brave act during the school assembly next morning. Neel and Aditya suddenly found themselves being hailed as heroes.

- By Debasree Bhattacharjee





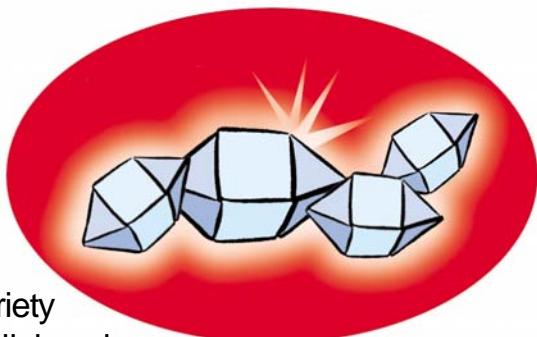
Zodiac

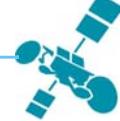
In astronomy, a *constellation* is a group of stars that form a pattern in the sky. Each constellation occupies a region of the sky containing that star pattern. Twelve of these constellations lie along the sun's annual path around the celestial sphere, dividing it into approximately equal parts. This 'belt' of twelve constellations surrounding the solar system is called the *zodiac*, and each constellation is called a *sign* of the zodiac. The sun, the moon, and all the planets, except Venus and Pluto, fall within the zodiac. As the sun keeps

moving ahead, each month it moves to a different constellation. The twelve official constellations or zodiac signs are Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. These signs indicate the sun's position each month of the year and were named by the ancient Greeks after the zodiacal constellations that occupied the signs some 2,000 years ago. Today, they are significant more in astrology than in astronomy, as they signify personality types for the people born under them.

Zircon

Zircon is a mineral belonging to the group of silicates. It has a tetragonal crystal structure and its chemical formula is $ZrSiO_4$. It has a ubiquitous presence in the earth's crust, appearing in igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks. The name derives from the Persian word *zargun*, meaning golden-coloured. However, zircons appear in a variety of colours - white, orange, yellow, yellowish brown, purplish red, light red, blue, and green; and sometimes they are colourless. The colourless ones are called 'jargoons'. Because of its high refractive index, the zircon crystal resembles a diamond, and is used in jewellery as a diamond substitute. However, it is much more brittle than diamond. Zircons are found in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Australia, Brazil, Nigeria, Tanzania, and France. Commercially, zircons are mined for the metal zirconium which is used for abrasive and isolating purposes. As the melting point of zircon is over $2,500^{\circ} C$, it is used in the steel industry to line blast furnaces. Being resistant to corrosion and heat, zircon products are used in engines, electronics, spacecraft, and the ceramics industry. Zircon products are also used in computer disc drives, for lightweight warmth and protection in clothing, and in many domestic products such as ballpoint pens and wear-resistant knives.

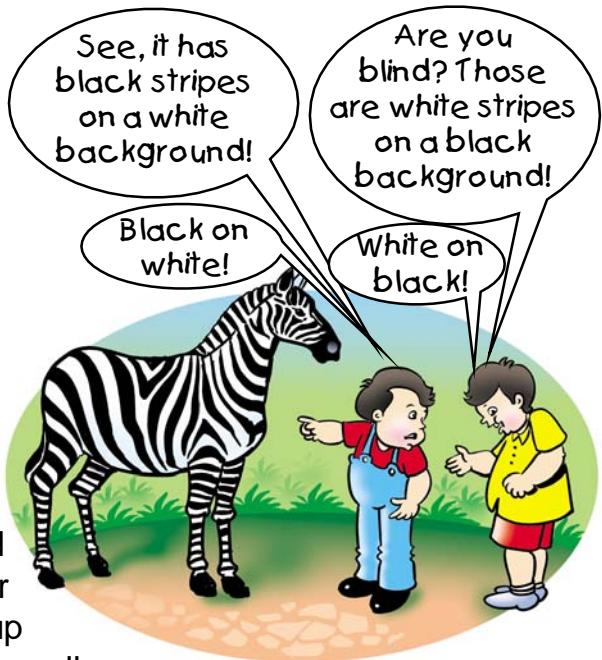




zebra

Which animal is the only striped member of the horse family? Answer – the zebra, a native of Africa. The zebra is smaller in size than the horse and it greatly resembles the wild ass in habit and form, having a short, erect mane, large ears, and a tufted tail. The stripes, which distinguish this animal from other members of the horse family, serve as a protective colouration in its natural habitat. The chief enemy of the zebra is the lion, but it is also hunted by Africans for its flesh and hide. Zebras are social animals, who live in stable family groups of up to 17 animals headed by a single stallion. Females establish a dominance over hierarchy. During travel, the dominant female and her foal lead the group. The stallion makes the rear guard when the family flees from a predator. The group members recognise each other by sight, voice, and smell.

Families maintain close bonds even during extended migrations with thousands of other zebra and wildebeest. The family does not abandon the weaker members, but slows down to allow them to keep up. Three species of zebra can be found in Africa – the Burchell's or common zebra, Grevy's zebra, and the Equus zebra.



- By Rajee Raman

Activity

How good are you at science? Check out your knowledge by identifying the following scientific terms, whose definitions are given below. All the words start with Z.

1. A bluish-white lustrous metallic element, used in a variety of alloys and in galvanising iron.
2. A branch of biology that is concerned with the study and classification of animals and animal life.
3. A lustrous grey strong metallic element resembling titanium, its atomic number is 40.
4. Any one of various invertebrate animals resembling a plant, such as a sea anemone, coral, or sponge.
5. The fertilised egg resulting from the fusion of the male and female gametes.



1. Zinc,
2. Zoology,
3. Zirconium,
4. Zoophyte,
5. Zygote

Answers:

Earlier **Chandamama** was excellent reading for children as well as adults. It had the Indian legendary, classical, as well as mythological stories in serial format running to several issues. The new **Chandamama** has no such long stories. The stories are short and end in the same issue. Please look into this, so that the lovers of **Chandamama** are not disappointed.

- P.C. Bhalerao, Pune

My father has been a regular reader of **Chandamama** for the last 25 years. I am also reading it for the last three years. Now I have started reading the back issues which my father had preserved. It is a treasure-house of knowledge, fun and entertainment. I liked the moral stories, especially those from the epics and Panchatantra. The Jataka Tales are very interesting. My personality and understanding have been greatly enriched by the general knowledge I get from your magazine.

- Sananda Gopalakrishnan, Kolkata

The cover stories on the Olympic Games were very interesting. The story "Three wise replies" was witty. The comic strip Dattu is humorous, and "Arya" is full of suspense and mystery. Indiascope and News Flash are really astonishing and informative. Please continue "When they were young".

- Syed Hasan Zahid, Gulbarga



I have been reading **Chandamama** for the past five years. I find the magazine very interesting. My parents who used to read **Chandamama** when they were young, encouraged me to read it. Everybody in my family likes to read **Chandamama**. I like "Arya" the best.

- Sindhu S, Bangalore

I started reading **Chandamama** when I was in 3rd Class. Now I am in 8th. I love your magazine very much. I hope Uncle Ruskin Bond will continue writing many more good stories.

- P. Nivedhita, Hyderabad

Everything I needed in life, I learned from **Chandamama**, and **Chandamama** is inseparable for me. That's why I am gifting at least two subscriptions every year.

- Savita, USA

I like **Chandamama** very much. I like the stories from the Arabian Nights. I tell my friends to read **Chandamama**. Please start a pen-friends column. It would be very exciting to have friends from other States and other countries.

- Dhanshree T.Jadhav, Pune

In **Chandamama** I like the Jataka Tales, and the legends from different lands. Being a child, I also like Kaleidoscope.

- Abadan Mohapatra, Bhubaneshwar

Read and React Contest prizewinners

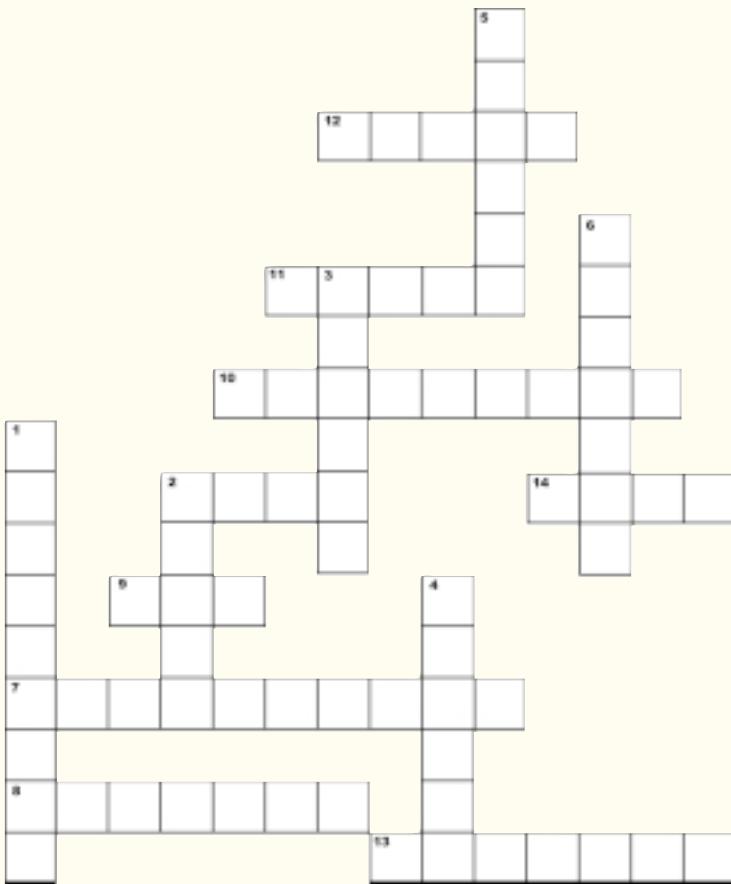
April 2004 : Sree Devi R., House No. 8, Flat No. 5, Laxmi Nivas, Royapettah, Chennai-14.

May 2004 : Pramila Kulkarni, 1226, Sector 55, Faridabad, Haryana - 121 004.

June 2004 : Reyomi Roy, B/16, Saranth, Anushaktinagar, Mumbai - 94.

PUZZLE DAZZLE

ENERGY CROSSWORD



CLUES:

Down:

1. What was James Prescott Joule's profession? (9)
2. Radios turn electrical energy into ---- energy. (5)
3. Darker surfaces ---- more of the sun's radiation. (6)
4. Nearness: as in 'the ---- you are to a stove, the warmer it feels.' (6)
5. A measurement of energy much less than a Btu. (6)
6. Energy which moves is known as ---- (7)
7. The term for energy passing directly from one item to another. (10)
8. When you do this to a rubber band, it has potential energy. (7)
9. Energy radiates to earth from this. (3)

Across:

2. Using a metal spoon to ---- warm soup conducts heat from the liquid (4)
10. According to the rules, energy can neither be created nor ---- (9)
11. Adding these to kites makes them more stable in the wind (5)
12. Another word for 'happen' : as in conduction causes the transfer of heat to - (5)
13. What 'B' stands for in 'Btu' (7)
14. What convection current causes in the atmosphere? (4)



- By Vaasugi

Across: 2. Stir, 10. Destroyed, 11. Tails, 12. Ocular, 13. British, 14. Wind
Down: 1. Physicist, 2. Sound, 3. Absorb, 4. Closer, 5. Joules, 6. Kinetic, 7. Conduction, 8. Stretch, 9. Sun.

Answers:



DID THEY CONQUER THE INVINCIBLE?

But why do you try to climb this mountain?" One day a friend asked George Leigh-Mallory.

"Because it is there!" replied the other.

Mallory was a young schoolmaster and lived in Cambridge with his wife and three little children. He was much admired for his good looks and athletic figure. He had a great passion for adventure and had a great dream, too. It was a dream to conquer the most challenging of all mountains, the tallest peak on this earth, Mount Everest.

Towering majestically amid the Himalayan range, between India and Tibet, the summit was discovered in 1852, from afar, by means of calculations carried out by the Indian Trigonometrical Survey office. Named after Sir George Everest, the Surveyor-General of India, it was first estimated to be 29,002 ft high, though a later figure gives its altitude as 29,141 ft.

For more than half a century after its discovery, the Mount Everest remained a mystery. It was in 1921 that the first expedition ventured to unravel the secret of this

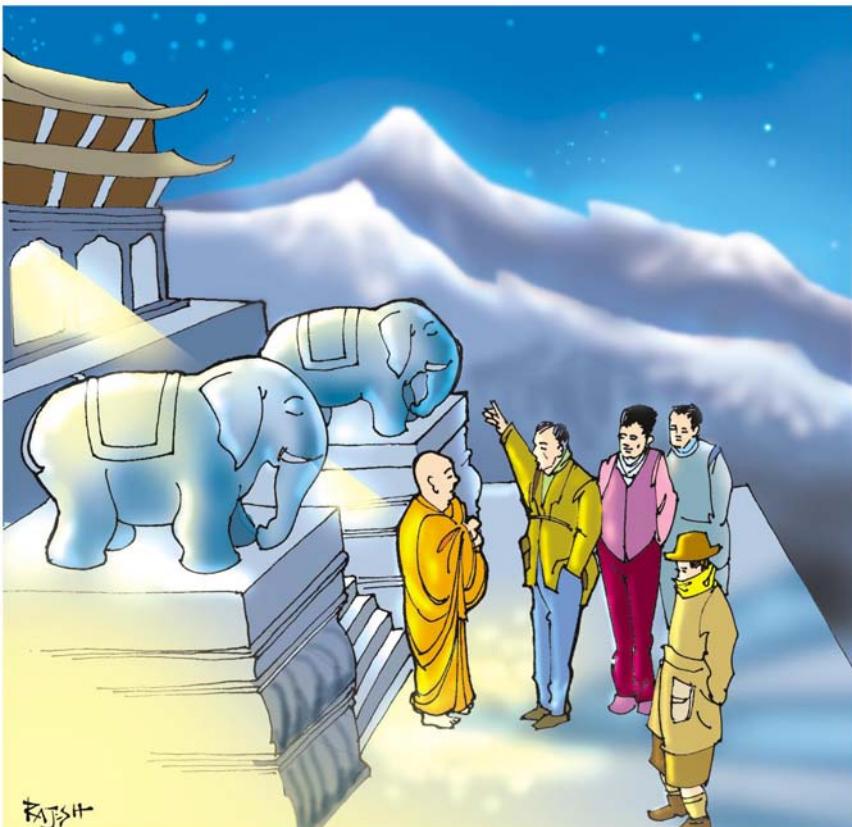
enigmatic peak. The team consisted of experienced English mountaineers and explorers, including the young George Leigh-Mallory, who later became celebrated as one of Britain's strongest and ablest rock and high-altitude climbers.

So these daring adventurers set off to a remote and yet unknown corner of the earth. In those days trying to ascend Mount Everest was like going up to the moon. Their journey was arduous and dangerous. "Day after day they pushed northward and westward across as savage a country as exists anywhere on the earth's surface – through sandstorms and raging glacial torrents, across vast boulder-strewn plains and passes 20,000 ft above the sea." Those were the days of endless toil and hardships. Some died out of exhaustion and a few fell ill and returned to the plains. But the rest struggled on, saddened by the loss of their colleagues but determined to go till the end.

When night fell they camped under the stars. Once they enjoyed the warm hospitality of a Buddhist monastery ruled by a venerable old abbot. He cordially welcomed them and asked many curious questions.

"Why spend so much money, endure hardships and face the dangers, merely for standing on the top of the loftiest of great peaks?" he enquired giving a bewildered look.

For some of these local people, Mount Everest was more than a mountain. They called it Chomo-Lungma, the Goddess Mother of the World. They earnestly believed that it was a sacrilege for mere mortals even to approach it. But General Bruce, one of the leaders of the expedition, explained to the old little Tibetan priest that as the summit was the highest point on earth, so it is the nearest point on earth to heaven. "Therefore is it not fitting that we should wish to get as close as possible to heaven during



our lifetime?" This seemed to satisfy the old abbot and he vigorously nodded in acknowledgement.

Soon the expedition reached the great Rongbuk Monastery, some 20 miles north of the Everest. From here they had the first ever close view of the summit of the world and they were the first Europeans to do so. "We paused in sheer astonishment. The sight of it banished every thought; we asked no questions and made no comments, but simply looked . . .," wrote Mallory.

The explorers scaled up to the height of 23,000 ft. Their ultimate goal lay just 6,000 ft above them, merely two and half miles away. They were tempted to venture higher, but they soon realised that their exertion was at its maximum limit and they dared not match their strength with the vagaries of nature, wild wind and the blizzards of the heights. They began their return journey to India. They were happy that they had at least discovered a possible way to the highest peak.

In 1922, a second climbing expedition was launched and Mallory was in it. Unfortunately, seven men perished, caught up in an avalanche, and Mallory took the blame on himself and called off the project. It failed but became the platform for yet another third expedition which set out in March 1924. Most of the old mountaineers were back, including Mallory. There were some new recruits, too, like Noel Odell, a geologist and 22-year-old Andrew Irving, a powerful oarsman from Oxford. He had no Himalayan or high-altitude climbing experience. But he was adept at repairing the oxygen apparatus used by the climbers at high elevation. The local Tibetans and Sherpas, porters, laughed at the strange bottles containing what they called "English Air".

There were some animals, too, that accompanied the retinue and carried the baggage. There were around 350 in all, yaks, bullocks, donkeys and mules. The yak usually moves at a slower pace than other beasts of burden. But it is the most reliable transport animal, capable of carrying heavy loads for as much as twelve hours at a stretch, no matter how difficult the terrain. But when it comes to a river, it does not wait to be unloaded, but plunges straight in and wades across. If you hustle a yak, it will serve no purpose. It simply gets annoyed, throws off its load and runs in all directions, charging anything or



anyone that comes in its way. While they are on the march, they expect their drivers to whistle soft lullaby tunes. If by chance the whistling stops for any length of time, the yak objects and there is usually trouble.

So the great retinue of 1924 made the six week arduous journey from northern India to the mountain. They arrived with high hope and optimism. "We are going to sail to the top this time, and God be with us, or stamp to the top with our teeth in the wind," wrote Mallory. But a month later, tragedy struck. Heavy snow and high winds spoilt the chance of a quick ascent wrecking everything in their path. The poor porters were caught unprepared without any adequate clothes or shelter. They suffered terribly from exposure and exhaustion and two of them perished.

Thousands of steps had to be chiselled out in rock-hard snow and ice. A 100ft perpendicular face of the mountain running straight up and down had to be negotiated. Ladders and ropes had to be fixed so that the porters could climb up with their heavy burden. There were many narrow escapes from sure disaster. Mallory, while trying to descend the wall alone, plunged through a snow bridge into a yawning hole beneath. Luckily his ice axe jammed against the sides of a wide crack in a glacier. By then he had already fallen 10ft and below him was only blue-black space. His companions were too far away to hear his shouts for help. Fortunately, brave and strong that he was, he managed to claw his way up to safety.

Mallory was now determined to give a last valiant attempt to fulfil the dream of his life. Monsoon was only a fortnight away. Once it set in, it would blow away all their hopes. So there was not much time. With Andrew Irving as his partner, Mallory moved up with unusual speed. They decided to use oxygen. Will they make it to the top? That night the men who descended from the last and the highest camp said that both the mountaineers were in good shape and full of hope for the triumph.

The next morning, June 8, 1924, geologist Noel Odell stood on a rock at an altitude of 26,000 ft and looked towards the majestic peak. There he distinctly saw on the crest of the summit ridge two tiny figures outlined

against the sky. They seemed to be just 700 ft away from their goal. Slowly they moved upwards one after the other. Suddenly clouds swirled in from nowhere and the two heroic men disappeared in them. That was the last that was ever seen of George Leigh-Mallory and Andrew Irving. They were at that time only 38 and 22 years old respectively.

But did Mallory realise his cherished dream? Did he and his partner climb the highest summit on earth?

In May 1999 an expedition to Everest discovered

Mallory's frozen body at an altitude of 27,000 ft. Could these two brave men have been the first to reach the highest mountain top and had only died on their way down?

This has remained one of the greatest mysteries of modern exploration.

Sir Edmund Hillary who, along with Tenzing Norgay, claimed the honour

of being the first to reach the summit in 1953, said in an interview: "The place that Mallory and Irving have in mountaineering history, certainly to my generation, is a dominant place, indeed. They were the ones who really got the ball rolling, as far as Everest was concerned. And I think that Mallory had almost an inspirational character, as far as his determination to succeed on Everest was concerned. He was the one that stimulated not only his companions, but he stimulated the whole world into an interest in the ascent of Mount Everest." - *By AKD*



Mallory



Irving



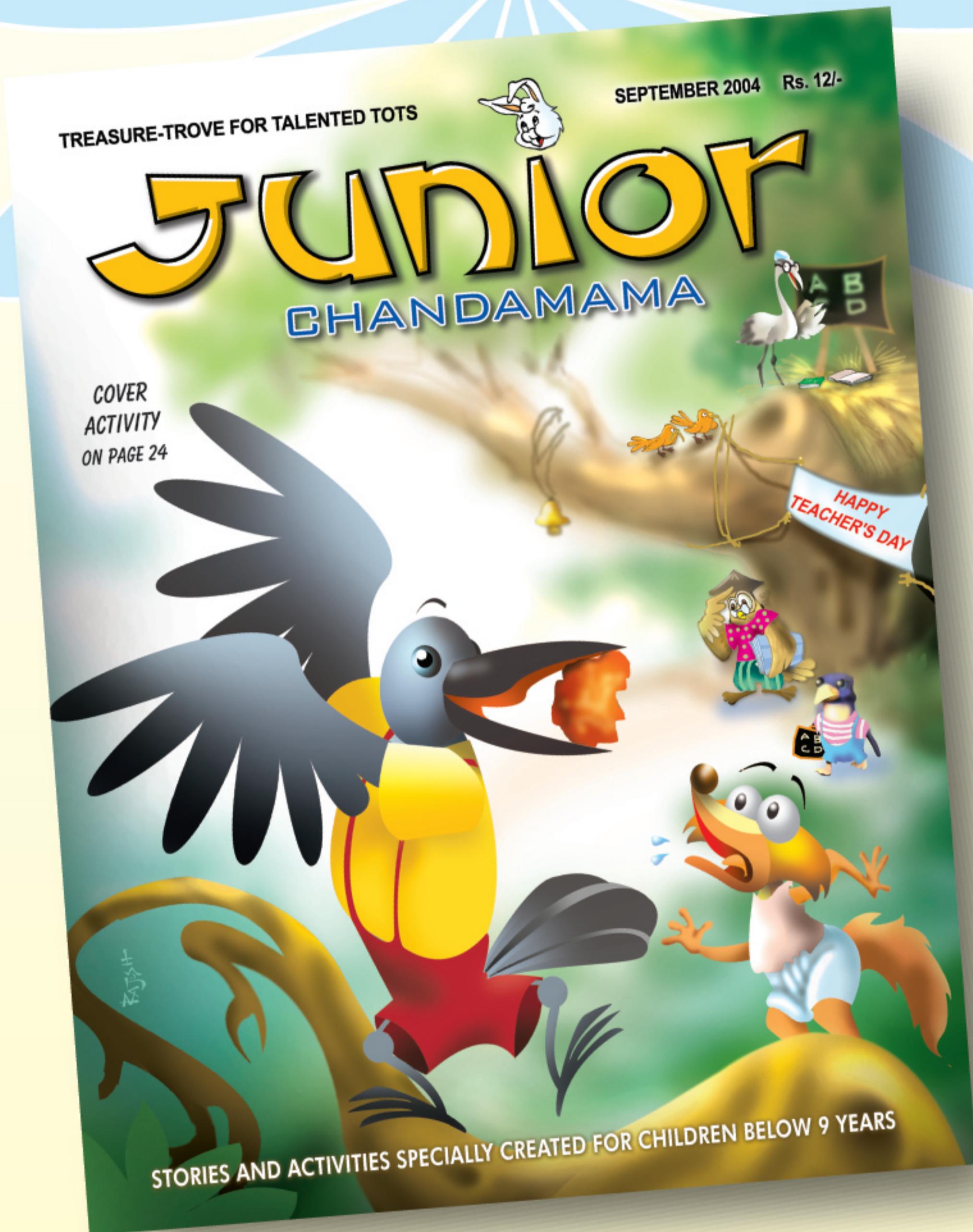
You must have heard the phrase 'dog days', used for referring to a particularly sultry period in summer. What does it have to do with dogs? The answer - nothing! The ancient Romans noticed that the hottest days of the year (in late July and early August) coincided with the star Sirius, also known as the Great Dog or Dog Star, being in the same part of the sky as the sun. They thought the star added its heat to that of the sun, and termed this extra-hot period

the *dies caniculares*, meaning 'days of the dog'. Thus originated this canine turn of phrase!



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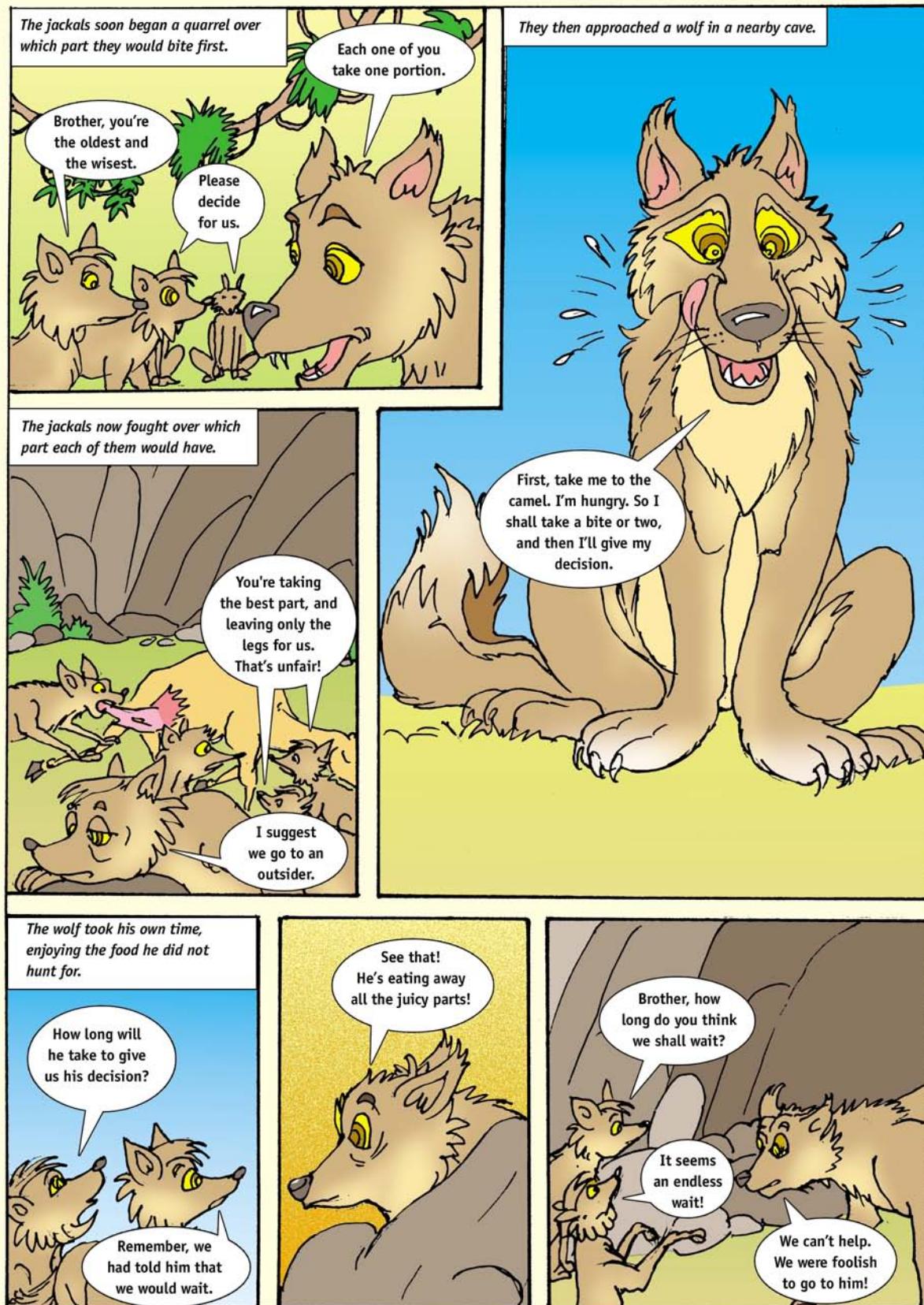
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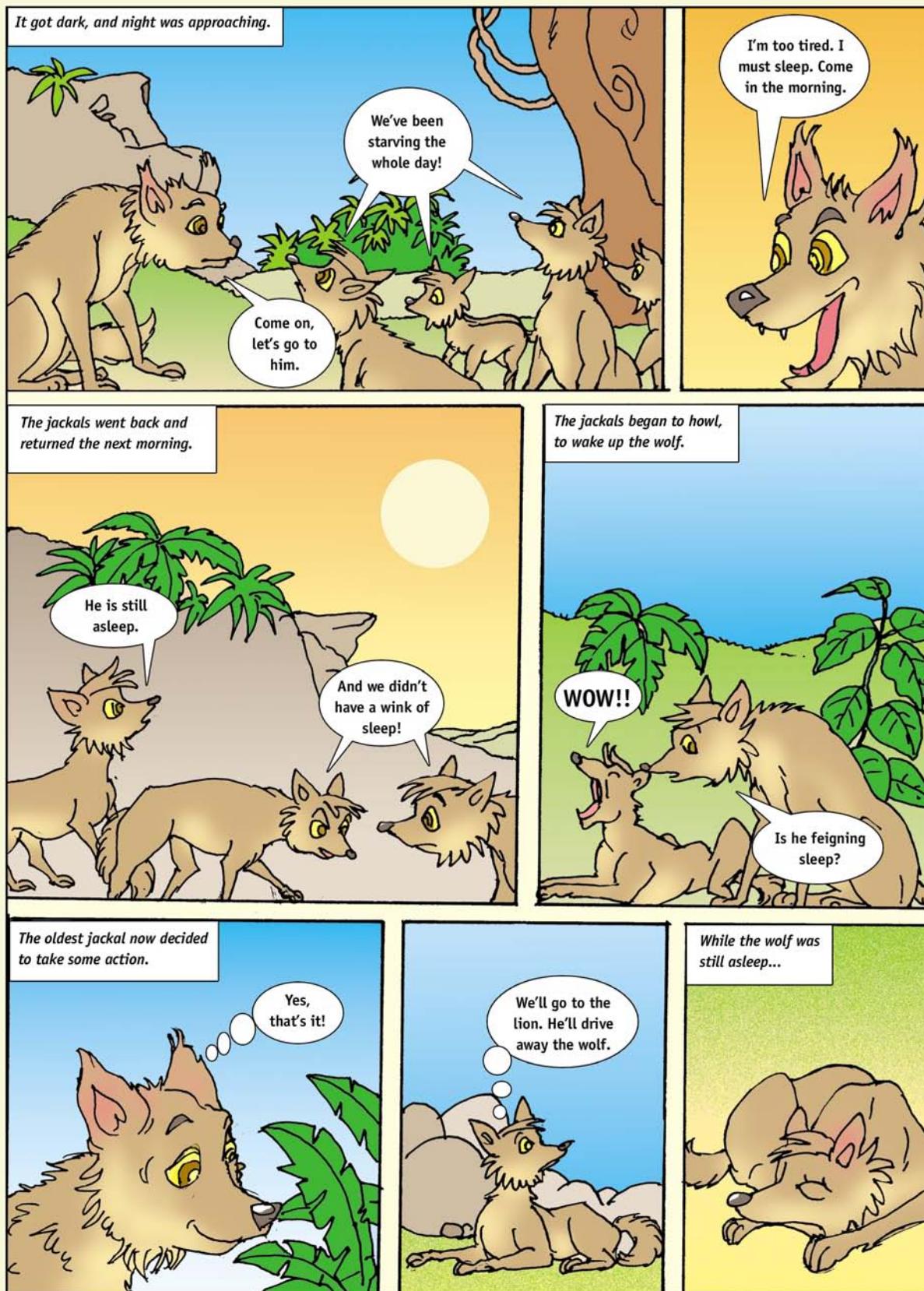
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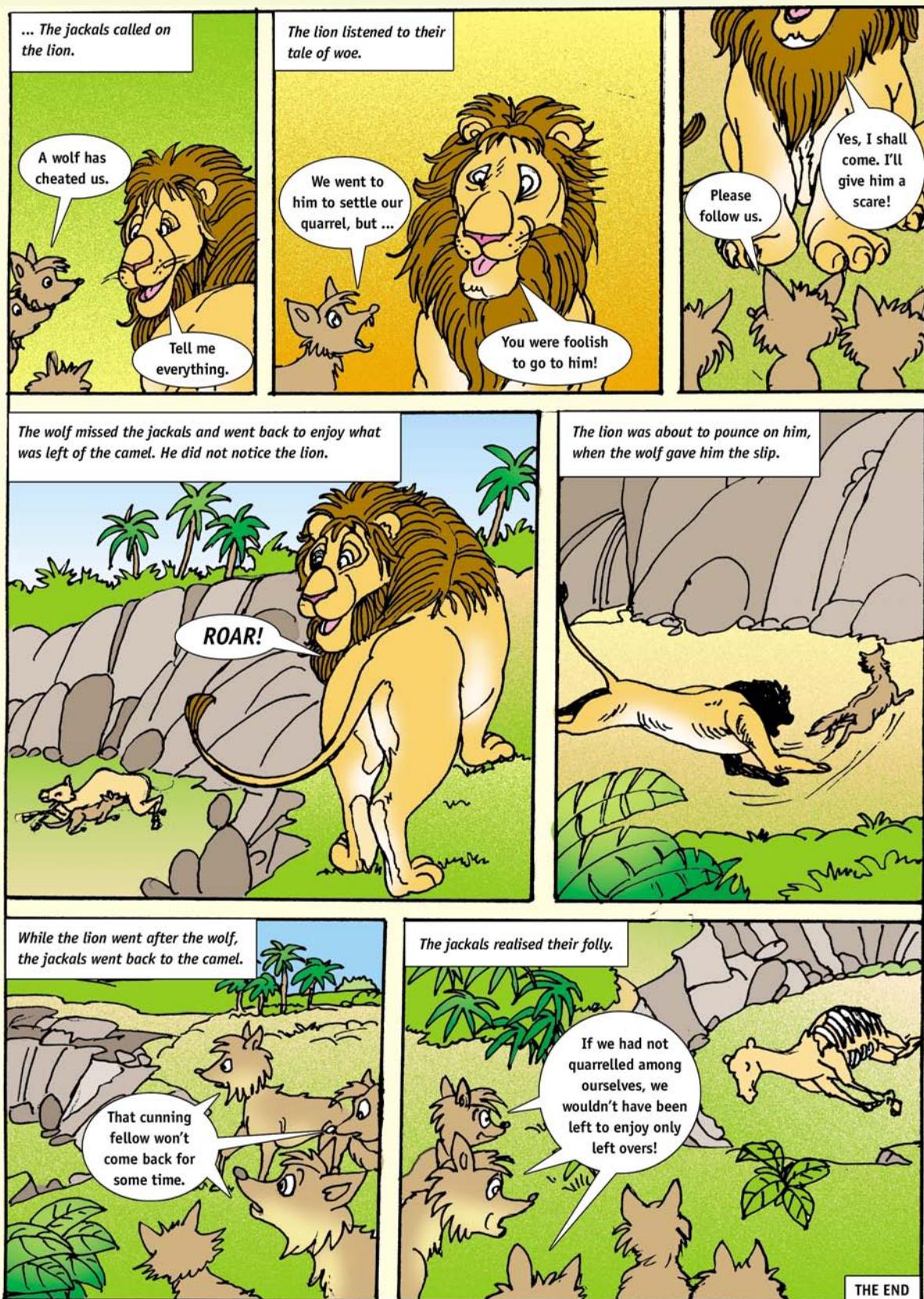
The Arabian Nights : A LESSON AT A PRICE



The Arabian Nights : A LESSON AT A PRICE



The Arabian Nights : A LESSON AT A PRICE



GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

The sons of Dhritarashtra were known as the Kauravas. The Kauravas and their cousins, the Pandavas, did not pull on well. The simmering rivalry between them resulted in the epoch-making Mahabharata war. The Kauravas were destroyed. The Pandavas emerged victorious.

Soon after the young hero Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, was killed by the Kauravas, his wife, Uttara, gave birth to a son. Known as Parikshit, he was the sole heir of the mighty Pandavas.

The parents of the Kauravas, Dhritarashtra and Gandhari, lived under the care of the Pandavas. The king Yudhishtira, regarded the old couple as though they were his own parents.

After some time Dhritarashtra expressed his desire to retire to the forest and live as an ascetic. He was accompanied by Gandhari, Kunti, Vidura, and Sanjay.

Six years passed. One night Yudhishtira dreamt of

his mother. She appeared emaciated. Yudhishtira, haunted by a strong urge to see her, proceeded to the forest. It was a happy reunion. It was during Yudhishtira's stay in the forest that Vidura passed away. Soon thereafter the others, too, departed to the world beyond.

It so happened that King Parikshit one day humiliated a sage who was sitting in meditation, by putting a dead snake around his neck. This angered the sage's son, who cursed the king. As a result Parikshit died of snakebite.

His son, Janamejaya, was determined to avenge his father's death by destroying all the snakes. He arranged for a rare Yajna. The fire-rite attracted the snakes to rush into its flame only to meet their death.

Long, long ago a king named Dhruvasandhi ruled in the city of Ayodhya. He had two queens: Manorama and Lilavati. The two queens had two sons, Sudarshan and Shatrujit. Sudarshan, the son of Manorama, was older than Shatrujit by a month. But Shatrujit was more popular



9. FIGHT OVER RIGHT TO THRONE

with the people than Sudarshan. But it was not as if Sudarshan was in any way inferior to his younger brother. Sudarshan was peace-loving and shy by nature.

Once King Dhruvasandhi went for hunting. In the forest he was attacked by a lion. Both were locked in a terrible fight. The king succeeded in killing the lion, but in the process he was badly mauled. He died before reaching the palace.

According to the custom, in the event of the king's death, his son must ascend the throne. The ministers made hurried preparations for the coronation of Sudarshan. The sudden death of the king had shocked both queens. They were lying unconscious. They were not aware of what the ministers were doing.

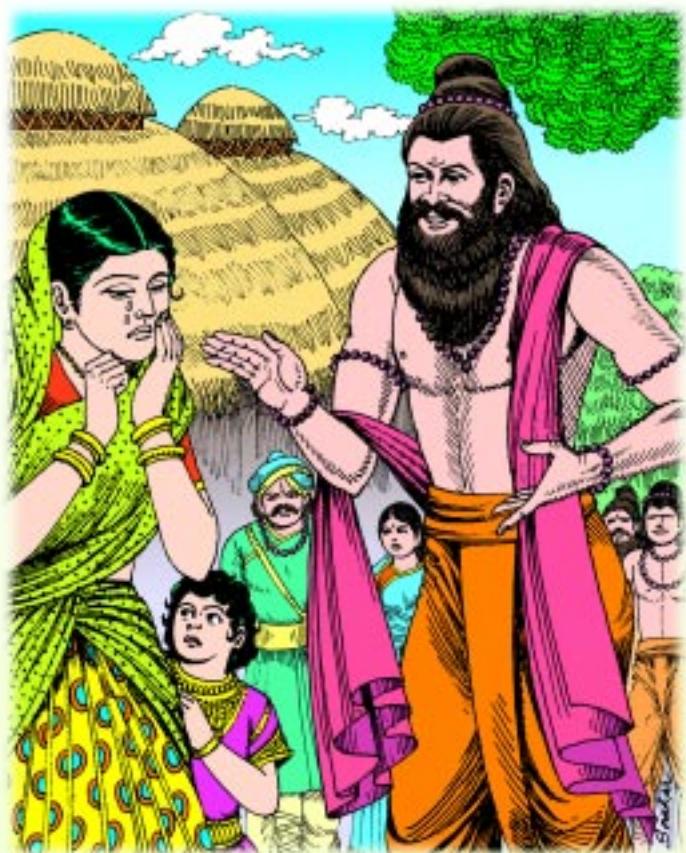
As soon as the news of the king's death reached them, the father of Queen Manorama, Virsen, and Yudhajit, the father of Queen Lilavati, reached Ayodhya. Each of them took upon himself the task of promoting the interest of his grandson.

When Yudhajit saw that preparations were afoot to make Sudarshan the new king, he told Virsen, "Look here, friend, it is true that your grandson is one month older than my grandson Shatrujit. But he is more popular and clever. In the interest of the country, we should ignore the slight difference in age between them. I propose that Shatrujit be made the king."

Virsen laughed at the proposal. "I never expected such a strange opinion to come from you. Whatever be the difference in age, the one who is older is to succeed his father to the throne. Sudarshan is not only the senior prince, he is the son born to the senior queen. Besides, to the best of my knowledge, Sudarshan is in no way inferior to Shatrujit. In fact, I should think Sudarshan is more serious, wise, and efficient."

King Yudhajit stopped arguing with King Virsen. Instead, looking at the ministers, he said, "I want my grandson Shatrujit to ascend the throne. I'm sure he deserves the throne more than Sudarshan who is just a month older than he. Do as I say."

King Virsen felt offended at King Yudhajit's threat. The two kings began quarrelling. Thus the coronation could not take place. The quarrel between the two kings led to a battle. Virsen was killed by Yudhajit.



Queen Manorama was shocked over such a development. She realised that her son's life and her own life were in danger. Queen Manorama consulted a faithful minister, Vidalla. "O Queen, you and Prince Sudarshan won't be safe in Ayodhya. I propose, we depart for Kasi. The King of Kasi is my uncle. He is powerful and prosperous. Let us seek refuge with him," said Vidalla.

Manorama agreed. Along with Prince Sudarshan, Vidalla, and a maid, she secretly left the palace. But, as luck would have it, a gang of bandits snatched away whatever wealth they were carrying with them. They crossed the Ganga and reached the ashram of Sage Bharadwaj.

Vidalla prostrated before the sage and told him all about the unfortunate queen and the prince. He came out and welcomed the weeping queen with words of affection and consolation. "Daughter, your son will one day become the king. You may live in this hermitage without any fear or hesitation."

Soon Queen Manorama set up her establishment near the hermitage.

(To continue)

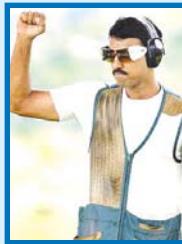


A Silver Victory at Athens



Ex-Army Man's Success

As we go to press, India's hero is Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, who bagged a silver medal in the men's double trap shooting event at the Athens Olympic Games. It is independent India's first ever individual silver medal in Olympics since 1896. The earlier successes have been only bronzes. The 34-year-old former Army Major, Rathore shot down 179 "birds" out of a possible 200. The gold medal went to Ahmed Almaktoum of the UAE, whose 189 birds is an Olympic record. In the recent Masters Cup held in the Czech Republic, Rathore had beaten Almaktoum.



Sister, Brother Team

K.M.Beenamol and K.M.Binu, both hailing from Kerala, are the only sister-brother pair in the Indian contingent competing at Athens, where they could be the only such pair among the competitors from more than 200 participating countries. While Beenamol will be seen in action in



400m, 800m and the women's relay, Binu will compete in 800m. Athens is Beenamol's third Games and Binu's first.



First Gold Goes to China

China's Li Du is the first gold medal winner in the Athens Games. She created an Olympic record of 502 points in an air rifle event.



Youngest is 14

Australia's Bryan Nickson Lomas is the youngest competitor in the Athens Games, which has attracted nearly 11,000 participants.

FIFA Honour for Indian Footballer

The Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) completed a hundred years in May this year.

India's well-known football personality, P.K.Banerjee, was conferred with the prestigious FIFA Centennial Order of Merit. He had played in 84 internationals during the 13 years he had represented India.

He was a member of the Indian team which was placed fourth in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. It was India's best achievement in internationals.



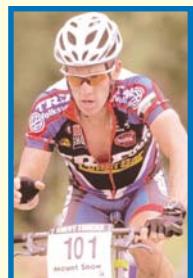
Anand Everywhere

Viswanathan Anand can very well be called the 'strong man of world chess'. Recently, he became the World Champion at Mainz (Germany) where he won the Chess Classic 'Duel of the World Champions' for the fourth time. It was his seventh title victory and fifth in a row. Just a week earlier, he won the Sparkassen Chess Meet at Dortmund, also in Germany.

History Made in Cycling

In the 101 year history of world's major cycling event, the Tour de France, Lance Armstrong hailing from Texas, USA, has won for the sixth time, riding into a record. His sixth crown in as many consecutive years has elevated him above four great champions who had notched victories only five times.

Eight years ago, the cycling world had wondered whether Armstrong would be a contender at all, as he was suffering from cancer in his lungs and brain. Then in 1999 he came victorious in Tour de France, and has not since looked back.



THOSE PRECIOUS DROPS

Phew! What a hot day!" sighs Veena's father as he drops on to the sofa, placing his briefcase by his side. He loosens his tie and pulls off his shoes. Veena runs to the frigidaire to get him a glass of cold water. He gratefully drains it.

Just then, Veena's mother comes in. Her face wears a troubled look. "Oh, you've come, Sanjay?" she exclaims on seeing her husband. "Just wait a minute, I'll get your tea!"

Veena's mother soon comes back carrying a tray. There is a teapot, a cup and saucer, and a plate of biscuits. She pours the tea and hands the cup to Sanjay.

"Where had you been, Radhika? What's the matter?" asks Veena's father.

"The water stopped two hours ago," explains Veena's mother. "I went to find out when the supply would be restored. This is the third time it's happened this week. It seems the water level in all the four bore-wells of our complex has come down sharply; so much so, they're not able to pump water to all the blocks daily, as they used to! Now pumping is done on alternate days. If this situation continues, the frequency will decrease further to once in three days, says the Secretary of the Association."

"But didn't they collect money from the residents last week for desilting the wells?" enquires Daddy.

"They did," says Mummy, "but apparently it was futile. The water level didn't increase."

"So, now, what does the Association propose to do?" asks Daddy.

"They're planning to bore another well. It's going to be expensive, and there's no guarantee that it will yield water. But what can be done?" says Mummy resignedly.

"I think we may have to buy water," says Veena's father. "I shall meet the Secretary and have a talk with him."

"We don't know how the other flats will react!" says Mummy.

Veena, who is keenly listening to the exchange, now asks, "Mummy, isn't there anything we can do to save water?"

"There is, and we're already doing it," answers Mummy. "If we use water judiciously, we can prevent wastage in so many ways. For instance, we must not let the tap run while we brush our teeth, wash vessels at the sink, or wash our car. The washing machine consumes a good deal of water, so we must not run the machine until we have a full load. Also, while taking a bath, we can save water if we use water stored in buckets instead of running the shower."

"Really? I never knew that!" exclaims Veena. "From now on, I shall try to save water. I now know that water is precious, and every drop counts!"



If you waste water, then it will also disappear.

Ask your Mummy & Papa not to leave the water flow unnecessarily while shaving, washing the vehicle, washing the utensils or washing the clothes.

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CHANDAMAMA

(November 2004 issue)

CHILDREN'S SPECIAL

Inviting young writers and artists (ages 6-15) to send original stories and drawings/paintings

STORIES

- Maximum 3 entries
- Entries can be in any language in which Chandamama is printed
- Number of words not to exceed 500
- Give a catchy title
- Selected entries will appear in all language editions.

DRAWINGS

- Maximum 3 entries
- Minimum size 15 x 10 inches
- The theme of drawing / painting should be from Indian mythology - a short synopsis to accompany the entry
- If selected on the basis of their entries, the participants should be ready to travel to Chennai to illustrate stories
- Travel expenses will be met.

GENERAL

- Attach passport size photo (colour)
- Attach separate sheet with details: name, age (date of birth), class, name of school, home address in full with PIN code, phone number, description of entries
- Entries to be certified by parent to be original/unaided work of participant
- Superscribe on the envelope : Children's Special



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